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SOLAR STORM HITS EARTH, CREATING LIGHT SHOWS IN NORTH HEMISPHERE

The Sun emitted two strong solar flares on May 10-11 at 9.23 pm and 7.44 am, US EDT, according to NASA's Solar Dynamic Observatory

BRITAIN SKIES WITNESSED NORTHERN LIGHTS

The greenish hues, also known as the Northern Lights were prominently on display in Britain on Friday night. The Northern Lights are expected to continue into the weekend and possibly next week. People posted pictures of the Northern Lights on social media captured on their cellphones. The Hanle Dark Sky Reserve in Himalayas reported a crimson glow in Ladakh

STARLINK SATELLITES UNDER PRESSURE

- The US NOAA alerted operators of power plants and spacecraft in orbit to take precautions. The flares could damage high-voltage transmission lines of power grids and satellites, disrupting navigation and communication services
- *Xinhua* reported that communications and navigations in most of China will be impacted in the weekend, adding the country has issued a red alert

11-yr cycle

HEIGHTENED ACTIVITY IN SUN IS WITNESSED AS IT APPROACHES ITS PEAK

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Devaraje Gowda sent to 14 days' judicial custody

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Holenarasipur/Bengaluru

THE Holenarasipur JMFC court on Saturday remanded BJP leader and advocate Devaraje Gowda in judicial custody for 14 days.

Gowda was detained by Hiriyur police in Chitradurga district on Friday night. Holenarasipur town police led by Hallimysuru circle inspector and Banavara sub-inspector took Gowda into custody in Hiriyur and brought him to Holenarasipur on Saturday around 4.30 am. Two mobile phones, some documents and a Toyota Innova SUV in which Gowda allegedly tried to escape were seized.

Holenarasipur town police have invoked rape and sexual assault charges against Gowda based on fresh statements by the 36-year-old victim.

The sexual harassment complaint against Gowda was filed by the victim on April 1. Sections 376, 354a, 354c, 448, 504 and 506 have been invoked against Gowda. The police started tracking his cell phones after his audio recordings with former MLA LR Shivarame Gowda came to light.

In connection with the case registered against him on April 1, Gowda filed an application for anticipatory bail on May 8. The petition has been posted for hearing on May 15.

Hassan superintendent of police MS Mohammad Sujeetha quizzed Gowda for almost four hours. His statements were recorded at the circle police inspector's office in the presence of additional SP Venkatesh Naidu and DSP Ashok. **CONTINUED ON: P4**

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during a roadshow at Mehrauli in New Delhi on Saturday | SHEKHAR YADAV

Modi playing the game of 1 nation, 1 leader: Kejriwal

Claims Mamata, Uddhav, Stalin, Tejashwi could end up in jail as well

ANUP VERMA @New Delhi

OUT on a 21-day interim bail ordered by the Supreme Court, AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday was scathing in his attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP, accusing them of orchestrating a perilous game of 'one nation, one leader.' Kejriwal also sought to stir the leadership pot within the BJP, speculating on Modi's successor as the prime minister.

The chief minister alleged that his incarceration was a "Modi move to quell opposition voices as AAP was a potential threat to the BJP". "Mamata Banerjee, M K Stalin, Uddhav Thackeray and Tejashwi Yadav could face similar suppression if Modi secures victory in the Lok Sabha polls," he said.

OFFERS PRAYERS AT HANUMAN MANDIR

Kejriwal along with his wife Sunita and his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann on Saturday offered prayers at the Hanuman temple in Connaught Place

In his first press conference after coming out of Tihar jail, the AAP chief cited instances of what he said was the diminishing stature of veteran BJP leaders like L K Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Sumitra Mahajan, Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Manohar Lal Khattar.

"Ours is a very small party, it has governments in just two states; it is a 10-year-old party. The prime minister left no stone unturned in crushing it," he claimed. "Our top leaders have been jailed. If top leaders of big parties go to jail, the party is seen as finished," said Kejriwal. "He (PM) thought that AAP would be finished, but this is not a party but a thought, the more they (BJP) try to finish it, the more would it grow."

The AAP leader also alleged a 'war of succession' involving UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Modi. "It is Yogi's turn. If Modi wins the election, he will change the UP CM within two months," he claimed.

"Many people ask me: 'Who is the PM candidate of the INDIA bloc'? I ask the BJP: who will be your PM? Modi ji turns 75 in September next year. Modi ji made a rule that whoever is aged 75 years will retire. So, I want to ask the BJP, who is your PM candidate after next year?" said Kejriwal.

MODI TO STAY PM TILL 2029: SHAH

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

ASSERTING that Narendra Modi will be the prime minister till 2029, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday clarified that there was no confusion in the party in this regard. He was responding to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's barb on the informal 75-year age cap in the BJP to hold electoral office.

Speaking at a press conference here, Shah asserted, "I want to tell this to Arvind Kejriwal and company and the INDIA bloc that you have nothing to be happy about Modiji turning 75. There is no such provision in the BJP's constitution. Modi will complete this tenure and continue to lead the country in the future. There is no confusion in the BJP."

He alleged that the INDIA bloc leaders knew the NDA would cross 400 seats and had resorted to spreading misconceptions. Shah rubbished allegations that the BJP would scrap reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs. Despite full majority in Parliament in the last two terms, the BJP never initiated any steps as alleged by the Congress, Shah said. He added that the BJP priorities were the construction of the Ram Mandir, abrogation of Article 370, reservations for women, and continuing SC, ST and OBC quotas.

Responding to recent comments by Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar, Shah asserted that Pakistan-occupied Kashmir belongs to India.

INTERVIEW

SHAH SAYS NO CHANGE IN QUOTA POLICY

Union home minister and BJP's chief strategist Amit Shah alleges that Congress wants to snatch away SC/ST and OBC quotas and give them to Muslims, as they did in K'taka | **P7**

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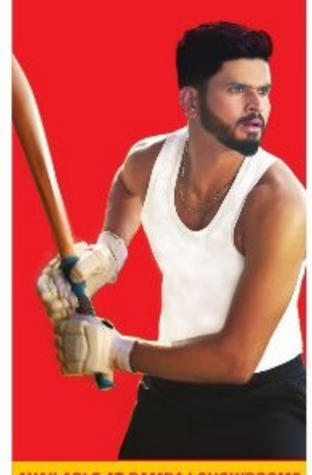

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Kharge's turn to write to poll body

PREETHA NAIR @New Delhi

THE war of words between Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and the Election Commission (EC) continued on Saturday as the former shot off another letter in response to the poll body's strong rebuttal on voter turnout data.

In a post on X, Kharge said it was surprising how the EC responded to his "open letter" while ignoring other complaints. "The open letter is addressed to our alliance partners and not to the Commission. Surprisingly, the EC wanted to respond to this letter while ignoring several other complaints given directly to it," Kharge wrote. The poll panel responded to Kharge's open letter with a strongly-worded missive.

It accused him of "attempting to push a biased narrative under the guise of seeking clarifications".

The open letter alleged that the "delay in the release of voter turnout data was an attempt to doctor the final results". In response, the EC termed the allegations baseless and "reflective of a biased and deliberate attempt to spread confusion". In his letter, Kharge expressed his misgivings about the language of the letter by the EC.

EXPRESS READ

Kodagu murder accused nabbed

Madikeri: Prakash Onkarappa, 34, who had allegedly murdered a Class 10 girl and fled with her severed head at Surlabbi village in Kodagu on Thursday night, was arrested at Garvale on Saturday morning. The severed head was recovered nearly 100 metres away from the crime spot | **P5**

Cong creating fear over Pak atom bomb: PM

Bhubaneswar: PM Narendra Modi on Saturday said the Congress has begun to scare the people of the country on the nuclear capabilities of Pakistan as it is staring at its worst defeat in the ongoing elections. To keep its vote bank happy, the party is finding new ways to create fear in people's minds | **P5**

BU HOSTEL GIRLS TAKE TO STREETS FOR WATER

PURAN CHOUDHARY @ Bengaluru

NEARLY 600 girls from Bangalore University (BU), Jnana Bharathi campus, took to the streets on Saturday to protest against water scarcity and frequent power cuts in their hostel.

Holding empty buckets and mugs, they sought immediate action from the vice-chancellor and other officials of the university. The students, who live in Ramabai girls' hostel, said the officials did nothing though they have been facing water shortage for the past nine months. Because of water scarcity, they feared infection due to unhygienic washrooms. "Substandard food is being served in the mess because of the crisis," they alleged.

The students claimed that they had showers only twice a week. "We complained to the warden and the manager several times, but no steps have been taken to solve our problems. Whenever we approach the V-C, his office tells us that he is busy or is travelling at the moment," said a student.

Meanwhile, the officials attributed the water shortage to power outage due to the recent rain which led to uprooting of trees and collapse of several electric poles. **P5**

Students protest at BU's Jnana Bharathi campus on Saturday

3 abducted, given electric shocks to private parts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kalaburagi

AN incident of torturing three people by giving electric shocks to their private parts after kidnapping them has been reported in Kalaburagi city.

Seven people have been arrested in this connection. Kalaburagi police commissioner Chetan R told *TNSE* on Saturday that Arjun, a second-hand car dealer from Devanoor village in Sedam taluk, and his friends Sameeroddin and Abdul Reheman came to Kalaburagi on May 5 to show a car to one Ramesh.

After a test drive, Ramesh agreed to buy the car. He took Arjun and his two friends to Hagarga road in Kalaburagi city, stating that he had to collect money from a man there. **P5**

BJP sees red as Left tries to wrest Begusarai, de-saffronise it

RAMASHANKAR @Patna

BEGUSARAI, once known as the Leningrad of Bihar, dramatically took a right turn in the past two Lok Sabha elections, riding on the back of the Modi wave. This time, however, the Communist Party of India (CPI) is working overtime to wrest its stronghold from the BJP.

SHOWTIME FOR GLADIATORS

Unlike 2019, it's going to be a direct contest between the BJP and the Opposition bloc. The BJP has fielded Union minister and its fire brand leader Giriraj Singh (71) as its candidate again. He is locked in a tough fight with CPI's Awadhesh Kumar Rai (72), two-time MLA from Bachhwada assembly constituency in Begusarai district. Rai is the joint candidate of the Opposition INDIA bloc comprising the RJD, the Congress, and three Left parties.

The candidature of Rai, a Yadav by caste (OBC), shows the Left party's intent to tap the RJD's solid MY (Muslim-Yadav) support base. In the 2019 election, Giriraj had won the seat by defeating CPI candidate Kanhaiya Kumar (now with the Congress) by a margin of over 4 lakh votes.

This time, the CPI's optimism stems from two factors -- anti-incumbency against Giriraj and the Opposition's joint fight against the BJP. In 2019, the RJD, a major regional party, had also fielded its candidate, Tanveer Hasan, who polled 2 lakh votes, splitting the anti-BJP votes.

"Giriraj is facing the ire of voters. He has done nothing for the welfare of the people in the past five years. All he did was to raise the banner of 'Hindutva' without missing any opportunity to hurl abuses on Muslims. Will the people of Begusarai vote for him for this?" asks Randhir Kumar Singh, a resident of Rosera.

Randhir, who owns a departmental store in the sub-divisional town, says that even those belonging to Giriraj Singh's caste (Bhumihars) are not happy with him. Randhir's anger against the BJP nominee is corroborated by Vijay Kumar Singh, a retired government employee of Begusarai town. "Giriraj mainly is relying on 'Modi magic' to win the election this time again," he remarks.

The ground situation is different from that of 2019 because there is a united Opposition candidate. However, this in itself may not be enough to defeat Giriraj. The CPI candidate's chances will greatly dependent on how well he is able to woo the Muslim-Yadav vote base of the RJD. On the other hand, BJP supporters believe Prime Minister Narendra Modi's blitzkrieg will overshadow all other issues and Giriraj will win.

Awadhesh Kumar Rai and Giriraj Singh (R)

ILLUSTRATION: MANDAR PARDIKAR

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Nakshatra: Ardra 12.38 pm • Moon in Kataka Rashi • Rahukaala: 04:30 pm to 06:00pm
Gulikakala: 03:00 pm to 04:30 pm • Yamaganda: 12:00 pm to 01:30 pm

WEATHER
MIN 22°C | MAX 33°C
FORECAST
Showers late. Mostly cloudy

Sunrise 05.55 am
Sunset 06.37 pm
Moonrise 09.32 am
Moonset 10.56 pm

A mother's pursuit of happiness

Life as a bonded labourer only strengthened Thayamma's resolve to dream big for her children

PURAN CHOUDHARY @ Bengaluru

MOTHER'S Day is not just about brunches, bouquets and gifts. It's a salute to strong women — the silent heroes in our lives who fight against all odds to protect, nurture and raise us into strong individuals. Thayamma's story is one such testament to the resilience and sacrifice of mothers from every corner of the world.

Hailing from a small village, in Hunsur taluk, interiors of Mysuru district, Thayamma has three children -- two sons and a daughter. Speaking about aspirations for her kids, the 33-year-old is overwhelmed, but firm in her words. She says she doesn't want her children to become like her or their father Murthy, or suffer like they did. The young ones should be capable of getting good jobs when they grow up, she says.

Thayamma, a bonded labourer for years, dreamt of a brighter future for her children. She wants them to be well-educated and hold their head high in the world. The family is from a marginalised background. In the hope of upgrading their standard of living and to get their own house, the couple took a meagre advance of Rs 60,000, which turned their lives upside down.

"My husband, Murthy, had a small dream. Since childhood, he wanted to build his own house. The area where we used to live did not have basic hygiene, and we wanted to raise our children better. But then we were trapped, left with no way out," Thayamma explains. Unable to repay the loan, the couple got entangled in the web of bonded labour.

Recalling her ordeal from 2015-17, she says a typical day would begin at 5 am and end only post 6 pm. While Murthy would work in the morning, Thayamma would help in the afternoon. She recalls how she would carry her children to the sugarcane fields. "I used to carry Surya, my youngest child, on my waist, while the other two -- Anitha and Ajay -- would walk by my side. There was no place to carry the food, so I used to stack it on my head."

When her children would get sick, only one parent could take them to the clinic on the condition that the other would have to continue working. Thayamma recalls the struggle of those days and wonders, "How could I endure so much?"

While she would toil in the sugarcane fields and sometimes help with loading the trucks – a task often done by male workers, Thayamma only thought of the wellbeing of her children. She was determined to give them a good life. "Being a mother, the hardest part was not being able to fulfil basic duties of providing healthy food and clothing for my children. It bothered me a lot. Our movement in social circles was also restricted, we couldn't even visit family functions," she emotionally reflects. The field work would drain her energy and the family ate once cooked meal three times a day. People often would raise questions about Thayamma and how she could raise her daughter.

Post a tipoff in 2017, Thayamma and Murthy's five-member family was freed from the clutches of ruthless bonded labour. Now, they have their own house and run a small tender coconut business to sustain themselves. "Those days are behind us now. I want my children to focus on their studies and become good citizens. Whatever they want to achieve, in some way or another, they must serve society," she shares with a smile.

On inquiring whether her now teenager son and daughter know of their ordeal, Thayamma brushes off the idea, adding, "I don't want them to know our struggles and feel sorry." Today as a testimony to her care of her daughter, Thayamma says, "Those same people whisper about how I treat my daughter like a queen."

Today, Thayamma is an independent and self-reliant entrepreneur, helping other Released Bonded Labourers (RBLs) through the Udayonmukha Trust, which she co-heads along with another released labourer, to find their own voice by selling handicrafts. With a liking for stitching and sewing, this brave woman is an inspiration to many. On Mother's Day, Thayamma pays tribute to all the mothers who go to any lengths to provide for their children. She says, "Every child must respect their mother. A mother's love and affection is the purest and deepest in the world. She sacrifices tirelessly and becomes the anchor for her children."

Thayamma helps other Released Bonded Labourers through the Udayonmukha Trust. (Top) Thayamma with her husband Murthy

RESPECT BEGINS FROM HOME

While instilling values in her children, Thayamma teaches her daughter Anitha to be safe, be diligent in her studies and strive to be independent. To her eldest son, Ajay, she advocates about his responsibilities towards his sister and her wellbeing. "I always tell him, you should love your sister unconditionally and support her pursuits. But more so, to always respect her. Even when you two are alone, or among people, you should respect her and her viewpoint."

The need of the hour

A hospital in Hulkoti village, Gadag, recently performed a kidney transplant that it claims is the first of its kind in a rural hospital. The hospital creates awareness about transplants and organ donations...

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR
@ Hulkoti (Gadag district)

ADVANCEMENTS in medical procedures have come as a boon to many, saving them from the cusp of death. But the stress of arranging funds makes it harrowing for many, especially in rural areas. However, a hospital in Gadag district in North Karnataka has been serving the needy by performing kidney transplants at a nominal price and is also creating awareness on kidney transplants and other organ donations.

The Rural Medical Services KH Patil Hospital and Research Institute in Hulkoti village in the district carried out a successful kidney transplant on April 24, which the doctors here claim to be a first in a rural hospital. The hospital is equipped with modular operation theatres with the necessary medical equipment to carry out complex surgical procedures. The donor in this case was a 55-year-old woman who donated her kidney to her 32-year-old son. Both the donor and recipient have recovered well after the procedure. The donor was discharged three days after the operation, and the recipient five days later.

The hospital is the dream child of late KH Patil, senior Congress leader and former minister. Patil had envisioned a well-equipped hospital with all amenities in Hulkoti that would enable complex medical procedures. This dream has now become a reality thanks to the dedicated team effort of the hospital management and staff under Dr SR Nagnur and leadership of Dr Avinash Odugoudar.

The doctors here claim that they are not doing it for commercial purposes, but to help needy patients. "Kidney transplants in Bengaluru cost anywhere between Rs 15 and Rs 20 lakh, but in Hulkoti it is Rs 5 lakh," said a doctor.

The hospital team has shown that with the right human resources, equipment, perseverance and commitment to serve, such procedures are achievable even in a rural hospital. A life-saving procedure is now affordable and accessible without any hassle, they claim.

Dr Odugoudar (Consultant Urologist and Transplant Surgeon) and Dr Deepak Kurahatti (Consultant Nephrologist) have not only trained the staff, but also guided and motivated the team to perform this operation at the hospital.

Dr Odugoudar, who completed his training in Urology at KMC Manipal and thereafter earned a fellowship in Renal Transplant from Liverpool and Robotic Surgery for Uro-Oncology from Leeds, UK, returned to his village of Hulkoti with the intention of serving his people and making renal transplants affordable and accessible to the common people.

Dr Kurahatti has undergone training at Apollo Hospitals in Bengaluru. The team also comprises Dr Bhuvanesh Aradhya, Dr Pavan Koliwad, Dr Sameer Desai, Dr Meghana Hipparagi, Dr Vishal K and Dr Vinayak Panchagar, who have worked at various hospitals.

After the first successful operation, the hospital management is now determined to continue to spread awareness about renal failure and facilitate accessible, affordable transplant services.

The team has been raising awareness about kidney diseases over the last three years. On the second Thursday of March every year, the team, in collaboration with Sankalpa Super Speciality Hospital in Gadag, organises events to educate people to identify the early signs of kidney diseases to expedite early diagnosis and appropriate treatment. A dedicated 'Transplant Clinic' is run every Saturday to evaluate and educate patients and their families about kidney transplants.

Dr Naganur said, "The most transplanted organ in India is the kidney. However, the current number of transplants (11,243) is insufficient to meet the estimated demand of 2,00,000 renal failures a year. India has a very high burden of chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Many patients rely on dialysis for their entire lives, while waiting for a donor or financial support for a surgery in private hospital. Hence, we thought of performing this transplantation in rural areas to make it affordable for rural people."

The team of doctors at the KH Patil Hospital. The hospital is equipped with modular operation theatres and medical equipment to perform complex surgical procedures

Awareness on organ donation

Doctor Avinash Odugoudar and Dr Deepak Kurahatti are now creating awareness about organ donation among people in rural areas. "Now eye donation has become popular, and people are aware of it. The same way organ donation awareness campaigns are planned in the coming months," says Dr Avinash.

Free kidney counselling

The team of doctors at KH Patil Hospital has started free kidney counselling. "Often, villagers are scared to go to doctors in case of kidney and other serious health issues. They think if they go to doctors in big hospitals, they are charged a hefty fee. To change this thought, doctors here have started counselling people free of cost," said a doctor.

EXPRESS READ

Terminated attenders of Victoria Hospital continue to protest

Bengaluru: The ward attenders who had been protesting against their termination from services at Victoria Hospital since May 8, resumed their protest a day after being taken into preventive custody. Maitreyi Krishnan of the AICCTU told TNSE that they are scheduled to meet with the higher officials of the Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI), including the Dean and Director of BMCRI, on Monday, to discuss the reinstatement of the employees. If the ward attenders are not reinstated, the protest will continue.

BWSSB finds 2,137 unauthorised sewage connections in the city

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@BENGALURU

THE Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) inspected 17,793 sites across the city, and found that as many as 2,137 buildings had unauthorised sewage connections that were letting sewage into drains. According to the board Chairman V Ram Prasath Manohar, the decision to check for illegal connections letting sewage into the BWSSB pipes and drains, is to protect public health.

Chairman opined that waste water is being discharged into sewers without official permission from BWSSB. Thus, the pressure on sewage increases, resulting in overflowing onto the roads.

To prevent this, unauthorized connections were allowed to be regularized from April 24. For this purpose, authorities have intensified the inspection work, to identify unauthorized discharge of waste water into sewers in their jurisdiction.

"Till date, survey has been conducted at 17,793 places in the city, of which, 2,137 unauthorized connections were detected, including 587 apartments. Out of these, 260 have applied for authorisation. Demand notices have been issued to 149, and fine has been collected from 60. Along with this, notices have been issued to as many as 1,390 places," said the chairman and added, "We aim to prevent this, and keep the city clean. The public should volunteer to regularize their unauthorized connections. If not, more strict measures will be taken from next week," said the chairman.

CMR Institute of Technology hosts a techno meet

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

To celebrate the National Technology Day, CMR Institute of Technology hosted Techno-Meet for Society 2024 - an exhibition that brings together over 100 innovative projects from students and faculty, on Saturday.

The event served as a platform to showcase ground breaking solutions across fields including robotics, farming technology, and water purification, all of which were aimed at addressing pressing societal challenges. Some of the standout innovations showcased at the exhibition were solar-powered robot, AI-enhanced sericulture tools, bluetooth-controlled robot, advanced water purification devices, and aid for the visually impaired.

Some projects aimed at enabling individuals with disabilities to actively engage in gaming by incorporating gestures simulating physical movements.

Dr KC Ramamurthy, former Rajya Sabha MP, Chairman CMR University and CMR Group of Institutions, emphasized on the significance of such initiatives, and said, "This exhibition not only underscores our dedication to technological advancement, but also nurtures our students to become innovative leaders who will spearhead societal progress, aligning with the ethos of National Technology Day."

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw lights a lamp to inaugurate the Chanakya University's Chanakya School of Biosciences in Bengaluru | EXPRESS

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw inaugurates new bio-sciences lab at Chanakya University

BENGALURU: Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw inaugurated the Chanakya University's Chanakya School of Biosciences, here. Shaw shared her enthusiasm about how the new facility would influence scientific research and advancement. She emphasised the need to create an environment that encourages creativity and collaboration in academia. "I am extremely confident and optimistic that this school will live up to its promises," she expressed. "I am honoured to support this initiative and to empower the next generation of thought leaders. Together, we envision this school as a hub of excellence, where groundbreaking research and innovation will thrive," she added. The newly established Biosciences Lab, equipped with advanced technology and infrastructure is said to support a wide spectrum of research activities in Genomics, Bioengineering, Diesel Biology, Computational Biology, and other fields. The university intends to provide Ph.D programmes, certificates and diploma programmes, short-term courses, workshops, and bachelor's and master's degree programmes.

SELCO to confer award on Richard Hansen

ENS @Bengaluru

A SOCIAL energy enterprise delivering sustainable energy solutions for the poor - SELCO, has announced the International Suryamitra-2023 annual award to the pioneer of PV technology Richard Hansen. Hansen is a pioneer in the application of PV technology combined with micro-finance, to increase access to energy in rural areas of developing countries.

In 1993, Hansen founded Soluz Inc., a corporation in Massachusetts, whose mission was to assist the global transition to sustainable energy.

He went on to establish Soluz Inc in Honduras in 1994, to commercialise PV technology for rural electrification, read a release. Richard has provided advisory services for major institutions including USAID, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank in Bangladesh, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Philippines. The award ceremony will be held on May 27, at Chowdaiah Memorial Hall.

A 56-yr-old woman and her neighbour were taken into police custody on charges of killing her alcoholic son Chetan in Puttur. Accused Umavathi Shetty had filed a complaint with Puttur police that her son had committed suicide on Thursday. Upon investigation, it was revealed that Umavathi with her neighbour's help tried to tie her son to a pole after he came home drunk. Unable to breathe, Chetan died

Court won't discharge Sudhir Angur in ex-VC murder case

'Even if the accused successfully show doubt in the allegations, it's impermissible to free them before trial'

YATHIRAJU @ Bengaluru

NOTING that grave suspicion against the accused is sufficient to frame charges, the 55th Additional City Civil and Sessions Court refused to discharge the main accused, Sudhir Angur, and another in the case of murder of Ayyappa Dore, former vice-chancellor of Alliance University.

"Even if the accused is successful in showing some suspicion or doubt in the allegations levelled by the prosecution, it would be impermissible to discharge the accused before the trial," said Judge Shriram Narayan Hegde, rejecting the discharge applications filed by Sudhir, accused No.1, and Rizwan, accused No. 15.

Senior counsel CH Hanumantharaya, the special public prosecutor, argued that Sudhir conspired with Suraj Singh, accused No. 2, who in turn engaged the other accused to commit the murder. Brothers Sudhir and Madhukar Angur are fighting over the ownership of Alliance University. Madhukar was supported by Ayyappa Dore which was a setback for Sudhir. The chargesheet discloses Sudhir's participation in the conspiracy and there is ample material to show that he is the rootcause of the murder, he argued.

Countering it, a senior counsel, representing Sudhir, argued that the deceased supporting Madhukar cannot be the reason for the murder. There are three dimensions to the case as per the complaint. One is related to real estate, another to politics and the third is Alliance University. The investigating officer has not conducted a proper investigation and the real culprits are not traced. An attempt has been made to connect the accused with the crime, he argued.

After hearing the arguments and going through the statements of witnesses, spot and seizure mahazar, and CCTV footage, the court observed that prima facie, it reveals that Sudhir is the main person behind Dore's murder. The arguments of the senior counsel for the accused are not acceptable. There is ample material to frame the charge against Sudhir, it added.

Noting that no ground was made out by Rizwan to discharge her from the case, the court rejected her application also. Rizwan is accused of harbouring accused Fayaz Khan, despite knowing that he had committed the murder.

> **The chargesheet discloses Sudhir's participation in the conspiracy and there is ample material to show that he is the rootcause of the murder** — CH Hanumantharaya, Public prosecutor

UNAUTHORISED DISPLAY

FIR against ex-mayor's son for banner violation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

SENDING a strong message to politicians, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike on Saturday got a First Information Report (FIR) registered against Karthik Venkatesh Murthy, son of former mayor Venkatesh Murthy, for installing unauthorised banners to wish his father on his birthday. Following a complaint by Aveesh HM, a member of the BBMP's special squad against unauthorised banners, the Banashankari police registered a case.

A senior official said, "Illegal banners are a violation of the Defacement of Property Act and BBMP Act and FIRs will be registered if such unauthorised posters or banners are put up anywhere in BBMP limits."

The official also requested people share images and locations if they come across such violations on the dedicated WhatsApp number -- 94806 85700.

The municipality will take action and also impose penalties. In the past, the civic body imposed Rs 50,000 penalty on the Youth Congress for installing banners in and around the KPCC office after the Congress government was formed.

Talking to The New Sunday Express, former mayor Murthy said, "Anybody violating the BBMP rules is wrong. I had advised my son not to ape what JDS or BJP leaders do."

GREEN AREA

Protest against BDA complex being turned into mall

ENS @ Bengaluru

MEMBERS of the AAP on Saturday protested against the privatisation of Indiranagar BDA complex area, and questioned the authority for allegedly giving up the space to a realty firm to build a mall. AAP state secretary Mohan Dasari urged the state government to build a tree park or a playground for children and preserve the green space, instead of constructing a mall.

Protesters advocated that 'Brand Bengaluru' cannot be built by only constructing malls. The overall well-being of the city needs to be kept in mind. The party workers warned of a larger city-wide protest if the plan for the mall was not scrapped.

Ashok Mruthyunjaya another AAP member said, "There are several malls in Bengaluru Government should look at the children who need playgrounds and open space."

40-yr-old cop treated for type of colorectal cancer

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

A 40-year-old policeman diagnosed with mucinous adenocarcinoma, a cancer originating from the cells lining the appendix, underwent successful treatment with cytoreductive surgery combined with Hyperthermic IntraPeritoneal Chemotherapy (HIPEC). Cytoreductive surgery aims to remove cancerous growths and affected organs in the abdomen, while HIPEC is specifically designed to target abdominal cancers that have spread to the abdominal surface.

The patient had been experiencing abdominal pain and frequent bloating. He also reported occasional episodes of nausea and vomiting. The doctors suspected that the patient's abdominal pain might be attributed to tuberculosis and performed a surgery. But, the patient continued to experience symptoms, prompting further investigation.

His histopathology report ultimately confirmed a diagnosis of mucinous adenocarcinoma of the appendix. Despite the total removal of the appendix, tumour cells were discovered to have spread into his peritoneal cavity.

Explaining the treatment, Dr Pampanagouda SKM, Senior Consultant Surgical Oncologist, HCG Cancer Centre, said, "When the patient arrived at the hospital, he had abdominal mass with distension of the abdomen. The imaging report revealed the cancer had spread to other parts of the abdomen to involve the abdominal surface and omentum. The patient then received neoadjuvant chemotherapy. We removed the patient's entire abdominal wall lining and the complete large bowel, and rejoined the ends of the intestines, and further removed the deposits over the fold of membrane that attaches the intestine to the wall around the stomach area, followed by HIPEC procedure involving circulation of chemotherapeutic drug solution throughout the abdomen for one hour," Dr Pampanagouda said and highlighted the procedure that treats the cancerous tumour.

RAIN HAVOC

A tree gets uprooted in RR Nagar after heavy rain on Friday | VINOD KUMAR T

EXPRESS READ

Miscreants steal ₹60K from the liquor shop

Bengaluru: Two miscreants broke into a liquor shop at TC Palya wearing helmets, and robbed Rs 60,000 from the shop. The incident took place around 2.20 am on a Saturday, in KR Puram police limits. The incidents are captured on CCTV camera where it is established that the two miscreants wearing helmet broke the shutter to enter the shop. They straightaway went to the cash counter, broke open the locker and escaped with the cash. Police say, they were wearing helmets and caps to hide their identity. After the theft, they also took away one of the CCTV camera and DVR, but their actions were captured in a different CCTV. The KR Puram police registered a case based on the owner's complaint and investigations are on

Depressed wife of KAS officer commits suicide

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A senior KAS officer's 34-year-old wife was found dead at her apartments in Annaiah Layout, Sanjaynagar police station limits on Saturday morning. Based on a suicide note reportedly written on March 11, the deceased, a High Court advocate, is said to have died by suicide.

The deceased has been identified as Chaitra Gowda, a resident of Elite Apartment in Sanjaynagar.

According to the death note, Chaitra was suffering from severe depression, and try as she might, she is not able to beat the depression. She also wrote that her husband should take care of their daughter, while also enjoying his life.

Her husband Shivakumar is currently posted as an assistant commissioner of KIADB, Bengaluru. The couple had got married in 2016 and have a five-year-old-daughter.

"Few minutes before taking the extreme step, she had spoken to her brother who also stays in the same apartment. Around 10.30 am, when her brother called back, there was no reply. He immediately rushed to her flat and found her hanging from the ceiling fan of her bedroom. He called the police immediately. The unfortunate event unfolded while Shivakumar was away from home," said an investigating officer.

WE ARE LISTENING

If you are having suicidal thoughts, or are worried about a friend or need emotional support, someone is always there to listen. Call Sneha Foundation - 04424640050, Tele Manas - 14416 (available 24x7) or Call, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences' helpline - 02225521111, which is available Monday to Saturday from 8 am to 10 pm

DCP (North) Saidulu Adavath said that the Sanjayanagar police have registered a case of unnatural death and are investigating to ascertain if there was any foul play in her death. The death note will be verified with the deceased's handwriting, and the police will check if there was any other reason behind her death.

The police rushed the spot along with SOCO and FSL team. After collecting the evidence, and details from the scene, the body was shifted to the MS Ramaiah Hospital's mortuary for postmortem.

IN THE COURT OF THE X th ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL JUDGE AT BENGALURU, (CCH-26)

P & SC No. 498 of 2022

Between: 1. **SHARMILA DEVI,** Wife of Late Jeetendra Kumar, Aged about 45 years,
2. **BHAVYA JAIN RATHOD,** Son of Late Jeetendra Kumar, Aged about 15 years, Represented by his Natural Guardian Sharmila Devi
3. **VEENA JAIN RATHOD,** Daughter of Late Jeetendra Kumar, Aged about 11 years, Represented by her Natural Guardian Sharmila Devi
4. **VIDYA JAIN RATHOD,** Daughter of Late Jeetendra Kumar, Aged about 11 years, Represented by her Natural Guardian Sharmila Devi

Petitioner Nos. 1-4 residing together at No. 9, B603, ETA The Garden Apts, Daffodil Block, K.P.Agrahara, Magadi Road, Bengaluru-560 023. ...Petitioners

And : **NIL** ...Respondent

PUBLIC NOTICE

WHEREAS, the Petitioners above named, have filed an application under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act for the grant of Succession Certificate in their favour, in respect of Schedule properties mentioned herein below. The schedule properties were held by Late Jeetendra Kumar Rathod, Son of Late Jestmal Rathod who expired on 06.01.2022. and was husband of petitioner No.1 and father of Petitioners Nos. 2 to 4 Interested parties are hereby summoned to appear to this Court in person or by pleader duly instructed, **on 27.05.2024 at 11.00 A.M.,** to show cause against the Petitioners, failing which the appearance will be heard and declared as ex-parte.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Sr. No.	ISIN	Company Name	Quantity	Market Price (in Rs.)	Market Value (In Rs.)
1.	INE436N01029	Advance Metering Technology Ltd.	2000	25.50	51,000
2.	INE0CH001012	Archidply Décor Ltd	375	54.45	20,418.75
3.	INE877I01012	Archidply Industries Ltd.	1500	50.95	76, 425
4.	INE363W01018	Bhagyanagar Properties Ltd.	151	38.70	5,843.70
5.	INE257A01026	Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd.	450	49.35	22,207.50
6.	INE118H01025	BSE Ltd.	54	723.30	39,058.20
7.	INE522F01014	Coal India Ltd.	100	181.20	18,120
8.	INE335K01011	Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd.	600	42	25,200
9.	INE267F01024	EICL Ltd	1000	2.00	2,000
10.	INE306C01019	Energy Development Ltd.	3600	18.05	64,980
11.	INE954B01018	Flex Foods Ltd.	200	87.65	17,530
12.	INE221H01019	GTL Infrastructure Ltd.	11000	1.30	14,300
13.	INE428D01019	Hindustan Tin Works Ltd.	250	80.60	20,150
14.	INE043D01016	IDFC Ltd.	650	50.55	32,857.50
15.	INE069I01010	Indiabulls Real Estate Ltd.	1100	73.90	81,290
16.	INE053F01010	Indian Railway Finance Corporation Ltd.	500	21.40	10,700
17.	INE962Y01021	Ircon International Ltd.	300	39.20	11,760
18.	INE967C01018	Kamat Hotels (India) Ltd.	1300	73.05	94,965
19.	INE760A01029	Kokuyo Camlin Ltd.	250	58.85	14,712.50
20.	INE951B01014	Krypton Industries ltd	1000	26.50	26,500
21.	INE215D01010	Mahindra EPC Irrigation Ltd.	250	99.25	24,812.50
22.	INE110B01017	Mindteck (India) Ltd.	100	137.80	13,780
23.	INE233D01013	National Plastic Industries Ltd.	750	48.00	36,000
24.	INE868B01028	NCC Ltd.	100	62.60	6,260
25.	INE194B01029	Panoramic Universal Ltd.	1000	5.00	5,000
26.	INE968G01033	Provogue (India) Ltd.	3000	1.00	3,000
27.	INE160A01022	Punjab National Bank	450	29.20	13,140
28.	INE415G01027	Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd.	780	31.40	24,492
29.	INE639C01013	Raj Packaging Industries Ltd.	600	32.10	19,260
30.	INE330H01018	Reliance Communications Ltd.	24500	2.65	64,925
31.	INE002A01018	Reliance Industries Ltd.	164	2479.85	4,06,695.40
32.	INE614G01033	Reliance Power Ltd.	250	12.30	3,075
33.	INE774I01031	Resurgere Mines Minerals India Ltd.	19650	00.48	9,432
34.	INE018E01016	SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd.	24	724.10	17,378.40
35.	INE538H01024	Shree Ashtavinayak Cine Vision Ltd.	7500	1.00	7,500
36.	INE879A01019	Shree Rama Multi-Tech Ltd.	1000	13.40	13,400
37.	INE734N01019	Snowman Logistics Ltd.	250	31.80	7,950
38.	INE25B01017	Spicejet Ltd.	200	49.60	9,920
39.	INE424H01021	Sun TV Network Ltd.	10	404.40	4,044
40.	INE040H01021	Suzlon Energy Ltd.	4000	8.90	35,600
41.	INE284B01028	TGV SRAAC Ltd.	400	85.65	34,260
42.	INE470Y01017	The New India Assurance Company Ltd.	490	102.65	50,298.50
43.	INE683A01023	The South Indian Bank Ltd.	400	7.85	3,140
44.	INE484C01030	Tide Water Oil Company India Ltd.	8	1073.80	8,590.40
45.	INE064C01022	Trident Ltd.	500	47.85	23,925
46.	INE236G01019	TVS Electronics Ltd.	100	209.80	20,980
47.	INE694A01020	Unitech Ltd.	6000	1.95	11,700
48.	INE703A01011	Videocon Industries Ltd.	1500	7.25	10,875
49.	INE669E01016	Vodafone Idea Ltd.	500	8.90	4,450
50.	INE528G01035	Yes Bank Ltd.	1200	13.45	16,140
				TOTAL Rs.	15,60,041.35/-

Given under my hand and seal of the Court, this 29th day of April 2024.

Address for service: **Sanjay H. Sethiya,** Advocate
Law Square, Advocates & Solicitors,
Level Two, No.2/1, 3rd Cross, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru-560009.

By order of the Court,
Senior Sheristedar,
City Civil Court, Bengaluru.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

My Client's Mr. **K.P. PRAKASH** & **K.P. ARUN KUMAR,** S/o. Late K.M. Papanna, R/at. 351, Kudlu Village, Kudlu last Bus Stop, Madiwala Post, Bangalore-560068, do hereby inform to the General Public that they have lost Original Sale Deed No. SRJ-1-05625-2012-13, CD No. SRJD116, dtd 19/01/2013, registered in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Sarjapura, Bangalore. Inspite of best efforts they could not trace the same and in this regard and they have lodged a Police Complaint vide lost Report No. 1047528/2024, at Jurisdictional Police Station, If anybody finds the above said documents or is in possession, please hand over the same to the above said address or contact 88800 01117.

SRIDHARA.P and **S.ANIL KUMAR**
Advocates
No.2, Near SVR College, Samasandra Palya, HSR 2nd Sector, Bangalore - 560 102
CELL: 88800 01117, 98864 38330
Bangalore, 11/05/2024

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MNHS Ltd. (425/65-66)
MUNDHRA Chambers No. 87, 2nd floor, 22nd Main Road Banashankari, 2nd Stage Bangalore-560070.

ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING FOR THE YEAR 2022-2023

Dear members,
The AGM of MNHS Ltd will be held on **26-05-2024 on Sunday** 10.30 a.m at **MAHESHWARI BHAVAN,** Okalipuram Main Road, Opp. LULU MALL, Bangalore-560021 We request the Legitimate members of society to be present and give your valuable suggestion for the betterment of our society.
e-mail: thelegalteammnhs425@gmail.com

On the order from the Board of Directors
Secretary
Sd/- (Akash Ranka)

Date: 11-05-2024
Place: Bengaluru

WESTERN RAILWAY
MATERIAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
VARIOUS MATERIALS SUPPLY
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No. S/21/2024 Date 07.05.2024

S.N.	Short Description of Item	Quantity	T.O.D.
275	LEAF SPRING OF M/S SCHUNK MAKE	1733 Nos	08.05.2024
276	RTV SILICONE RUBBER COMPOUND SINGLE COMPONENT RTV TYPE	15846 Nos	15.05.2024
277	66 KV (E) GRADE SINGLE CORE 400 SQ.MM	2000 Mtr	20.05.2024
278	PVC CABLE 2 CORE, 70 SQMM	18400 Mtr	20.05.2024
279	THIN WALLED E BEAM 19 CORE X 2.5 SQMM	24000 Mtr	21.05.2024
280	THIN WALLED E BEAM SINGLE CORE X 185 SQMM.	24000 Mtr	21.05.2024
281	THIN WALLED E BEAM SIZE SINGLE CORE X 120 SQMM	24000 Mtr	21.05.2024
282	THIN WALLED E BEAM SIZE SINGLE CORE X 240 SQMM	9000 Mtr	21.05.2024
283	SWITCH FOR HEAD LIGHT 16A-380V	185 Nos	22.05.2024
284	CORONARY GUIDE CATHETER	700 Nos	23.05.2024
285	D.L.SHEET-3MM (ICF)	4856 Nos	27.05.2024
286	12 V , 7 AH SEALED MAINTENANCE FREE (SMF) LEAD ACID RECHARGEABLE BATTERY	9960 Nos	27.05.2024
287	SET OF CABLES FOR MANUFACTURING OF 8 WHEELER DETC.	20 Set	27.05.2024
288	SET OF SPRING LOADED SWITCH 6AMP-250 VOLTS	350 Nos	27.05.2024
289	VERTICAL TAKE OFF CABLE HEAD TERMINAL SYSTEM	48 Nos	27.05.2024
290	GENTIAN BLUE.	59120 Ltr	28.05.2024
291	DESIGN, SUPPLY, FOUNDATION, INSTALLATION & COMMISSIONING OF PLOSPHATING PLANT	2 Nos	28.05.2024
292	PTCA GUIDE WIRE	800 Nos	28.05.2024
293	LEAD ACID BATTERY CAPACITY 8V, 290 AH	137 Nos	29.05.2024
294	SET OF SIEMENS MAKE PROGRAMME SWITCHES.	60 Set	30.05.2024
295	CRT-D WITH ACCESSORIES	5 Nos	30.05.2024
296	UNIVERSAL SERVO HYDRAULIC SHOCK ABSORBER TESTING MACHINE	1 Nos	01.06.2024
297	LOCK FOR UPGRADED HIGH TENSILE	1563 Nos	01.06.2024
298	ANTIWEAR HYDRAULIC OIL, GR. VG-68 CONFIRMING TO IS:10522-83 (ANTIWEAR) WITH ANILINE POINT 90%BAC,MIN. IN PLACE OF SEAL COMPATIBILITY TEST AND MIN. PASS LOAD OF 9TH STAGE IN FZG NIEMANN TEST.	38350 Ltr	01.06.2024
299	SHOCK ABOBSORBER TESTING MACHINE	4 Nos	03.06.2024
300	SPHEROLASTIC SILENT BLOCK	214 Nos	03.06.2024
301	COMPLETE BRAKE GEAR ARRANGEMENT.	70 Set	03.06.2024
302	SUPPLY INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF ELECTRICAL AIR COMPRESSOR CAPACITY 500 CFM	1 Nos	05.06.2024
303	ELECTRIC AIR COMPRESSOR 500 CFM , 10 KG/CM2	1 Nos	07.06.2024

Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website www.ireps.gov.in and www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in 0126

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Indian Overseas Bank
ARM Branch (2666), No 10/1 III Floor, Lakshminarayan Complex Palace Road, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru- 560052, Karnataka, Phone : 080-22250258, Email ID: iob2666@iob.in

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E- AUCTION FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

Sale of immovable properties mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) whereas, the Authorized Officer of Indian Overseas Bank has taken possession of the following properties pursuant to the notice issued under Section 13(2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 in the following loan account with right to sell the same on, **AS IS WHERE IS BASIS and AS IS WHAT IS BASIS** for realization of Bank's dues plus interest & costs as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act proposes to realize the Bank's dues by sale of the said properties. The sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Web Portal **www.mstcecommerce.com**

Name & address of the Borrowers/ Guarantors:- Borrowers: 1. Mr. P.L.Palaniyappan, S/o Mr. Palanichamy, #3, Flat No.T-99, SDR Castle, 3rd Cross, Devamma Road, Sonnappa Layout, Lingarajapura, Bangalore-560084. **2. Mr. P.L.Palaniyappan, S/o, Mr. Palanichamy,** G-1, Sai Subha, F-6, Ground Floor, 4C-403, OMBR Lay out, Bangalore- 560043. **Guarantors: Mr. M.A.Stephen Dilipraj, S/o M R Anthonyraj,** Flat.No.105, Indira Tower, Bank Avenue, 10th Street, Babusapalya, Kalyanna Nagar, Bangalore-560043.

Date of NPA: 01.04.2015 **Date of Demand notice: 19.01.2016**

Dues claimed in Demand Notice: Rs. 29,26,966.17/- as on 19.01.2016 with further interest & costs.

Date of possession notice: 12.04.2016

Dues claimed in Possession Notice: Rs.29,26,966.17 as on 19.01.2016 with further interest & costs.

Outstanding dues as on 07.05.2024 is Rs.84,54,251/- with further interest & costs.

***Local Self Government (Property Tax, Water sewerage, Electricity Bills etc.): Not known.**

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY: All that Piece & Parcel of Residential Apartment/Flat No.T-99, 3rd Floor, New Assigned BBMP Khata No.3/10, PID No.87-85-3/10 In The Residential Building Known As SDR Castle Constructed On The Property Bearing New Corporation No.3 (Formally Khaneshumari/ House List Khata No.20, 21 & 22/10) Presently Within The Limits of BBMP, Ward No.87 Of Lingarajapura Ward, PID No.87-85-3, Situated at Devamma Road, Sonnappa Layout, Lingarajapura, Bengaluru-560045. **Measurement:** 425 Sq.Ft. of Undivided Share and Super Built Up Area of 1850 Sqft. With One Covered Car Parking. **Boundaries: East By:** Road, **West By:** Khaneshumari No.27, 28 & 29, **North By:** Khaneshumari No.23, **South By:** Khaneshumari No.23.
The Apartment is in the Name of the Guarantor Mr. M.A.Stephen Dilipraj, S/o Mr. M.R.Anthonyraj.

The reserve price and the earnest money deposit is:

Sr. No.	Security Details	Reserve Price	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Bid Increase Amt
1	Immovable Property as mentioned above	Rs. 77,52,728/-	Rs.7,75,273/-	Rs. 50,000/-

Date & Time of auction: 29.05.2024, 11.00 AM to 1.00 PM

Bid increase amount: Rs. 50,000/- **Auto extension time: 10 minutes**

Known Encumbrance if any: NIL

Inspection Date& Time: during office hours from 10:00 AM till 05:00 PM, from 09.05.2024 to 28.05.2024.

***Bank's dues have priority over the statutory dues.**
For terms and conditions please visit: **https://www.iob.in/e-Auctions.aspx , https://www.publishtenders.gov.in , https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi** (web portal of e-auction of Service provider)

Date: 08-05-2024 **Sd/- Authorized Officer**
Place: Bangalore **Indian Overseas Bank**

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
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PRESS SUPERVISOR

More than 2,500 individuals, including 2,000 nurses, nursing students, and employees at nursing schools, colleges, and community health centres, will gather to hold a mega rally followed by cultural activities outside Vidhana Soudha to commemorate International Nurses Day on May 12

DRAMA SURROUNDS ARREST OF DEVARAJE GOWDA

Picked up late at night near Guylalu tollgate in Chitradurga dist

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chitradurga

HIGH drama preceded the detention of Devaraje Gowda, an advocate and a BJP leader from Hassan, at Guylalu tollgate near Hiriyur in Chitradurga district late on Friday night. As soon as Gowda switched on his mobile phone to make a video clipping to send it to a WhatsApp group, the Hassan police which was trying to trace the mobile phone of Gowda located it moving towards Hiriyur and requested the Chitradurga police to pick him up. The police, who stopped his car at the tollgate, found three bagsful of clothes in his vehicle.

Gowda recently alleged that Deputy CM DK Shivakumar was involved in the distribution of pen drivers containing alleged obscene videos of Hassan JDS-BJP Lok Sabha candidate.

Additional Superintendent of Police Kumaraswamy told The New Sunday Express that they traced the mobile phone location of Gowda based on the request of the Hassan district police and detained him.

He said the Holenarasipura police arrived at the Hiriyur Rural police station around midnight and took Gowda to Hassan where he was produced before the Hassan court. Gowda, who is also being probed for his involvement in the Prajwal's alleged "sex abuse" row, was arrested by the Hassan police in connection with an SC/ST atrocity case filed by a couple on March 31 this year.

The woman also filed a sexual harassment case against Gowda on April 1. Gowda allegedly offered to help the woman and her husband to get funds to build a house on their property in Hassan, but later allegedly cheated them.

Gowda, who contested the 2023 Assembly polls from Holenarasipur, lost to JDS candidate HD Revanna.

In January this year, Gowda had threatened to release alleged sex videos of Revanna's son and Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna. The video clips, however, came out in April ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

Faces case for obstructing official on duty

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

DEVARAJE Gowda too reportedly posed some questions to the police officers.

After his statements were recorded, he was taken to the government hospital in Holenarsipur for mandatory medical tests.

Meanwhile, Hassan extension police have taken up a complaint against the advocate for allegedly preventing Hassan's deputy commissioner C Sathyabhama from discharging her duty while at office a few months ago.

Gowda is also wanted by SIT probing the Hassan sex scandal. He had responded to the SIT's first notice by giving his statements.

However, he absconded after SIT issued him a second notice in connection with his press conference where he played some audio recordings and showed documents claiming to be crucial in the probe into the sex scandal.

He had also urged the government to hand over the case to the CBI after he was allegedly asked by an officer of SIT to delete a statement which he had made against Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.

JANATA PARTY OFFERS Rs 1 LAKH FOR FINDING PRAJWAL

Bengaluru: Police have detained Janata Party state secretary general N Nagesh as he and other party workers were putting up posters announcing a reward of Rs 1 lakh to whoever hands over Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, accused in a sex scandal case, to the police. They were putting up the posters in Shivananda Circle railway bridge in High Ground police station limits on Saturday morning. "The Hassan JDS MP caused humiliation not only for the state but also the country, and now he has gone missing. It is curious how the investigation is going on without the accused in such a serious case. The accused must face the investigation and prove himself innocent. It is a wrong message that a responsible position holder like an MP is evading authorities," Nagesh told TNSE. He further added that this incident has brought shame to Hassan district and the entire Kannadiga community. ENS

RARE BONHOMIE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and BJP leader BS Yediyurappa at a shraddanjali programme for late V Srinivas Prasad at Ashokapuram in Mysuru on Saturday | UDAYASHANKAR S

Former CM Krishna continues to be in ICU

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

FORMER chief minister SM Krishna, who is undergoing treatment, is said to be in a critical condition. The 92-year-old veteran politician has been admitted to the Medical Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Manipal Hospital in Bengaluru.

He is being treated by Dr Satyanarayana Mysore, HOD and Consultant, Pulmonology Lung Transplant Physician, Manipal Hospital, and a critical care team led by Dr Sunil Karanth, Chairman, HOD and Consultant of Critical Care Medicine.

"SM Krishna continues to be in ICU and is on adequate support," the official hospital statement said. Hospital authorities said the family wishes to maintain confidentiality regarding the senior leader's health.

On April 29, Krishna was rushed to the hospital after experiencing minor ailments. Krishna served as the 16th chief minister of Karnataka from 1999 to 2004. Later, he served as Union external affairs minister from 2009 to 2012. The senior leader also served as Governor of Maharashtra from 2004 to 2008. Krishna switched from the Congress to the BJP in 2017 and has remained affiliated with the party ever since.

POLITICS OVER SEX SCANDAL: NEED TO SEPARATE GRAIN FROM CHAFF

POLITICS over the sex scandal, allegedly involving Janata Dal (Secular) MP Prajwal Revanna, is getting more intense by the day. There is no letup in the political slugfest even after the curtains came down on the fiercely fought Lok Sabha elections in Karnataka, although four phases of polling remain in other parts of the country.

Allegations and counter-allegations are flying thick and fast, vitiating the atmosphere. The fairness of the probe by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) is being questioned; JDS is accusing Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar of being responsible for circulating the videos and compromising the privacy of several women, and has appealed to the Governor to advise the chief minister to drop him from the ministry; BJP-JDS are demanding a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI); Congress is accusing the regional party of trying to divert the attention from the main case and the BJP of shielding the accused and launching a witch hunt against its leaders.

Meanwhile, many audio clips and cases registered earlier against the dramatis personae are tumbling out of the closet. It's turning out to be a free-for-all. Leaders cutting across party lines – including those from the party in power in the state – are trying to make their points and trading charges with each other.

In an election rally in Shivamogga, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged that 400 women were raped. From where did he get this number? Was it just election rhetoric? Did he or his party provide that information to the SIT probing the case? Won't such comments from top leaders impact the probe?

Not just Congress, the JDS and BJP, too, must refrain from politicising the case, while they have every right to continue their fight for justice.

It is not correct to cast aspersions on SIT officers or their ability to take the case to its logical end. They are handling a highly sensitive case that involves the privacy of several women and their families, besides the members of a prominent political family and a party. The government and the Home Department must do everything to ensure that the probe is fair as punishing the guilty and doing justice to the victims is more important than the politics surrounding it, which will go on.

Former DG&IGP ST Ramesh says that the SIT has to separate the grain from the chaff. It is a sensitive case bound to create a lot of noise, reactions, opinions, and responses from various political parties, individuals and civil society. The purpose of the investigation is to find out the truth and collect evidence to support the truth.

They have to collect oral, documentary, circumstantial, forensic, and electronic evidence, and if a rape case is made out prima facie, the medical evidence as well. All the noise around the case may die down after six months, but if the case comes up before the court for hearing in due course, the Investigating Officer has to justify the investigation. By and large, the system has enough checks and balances to ensure that there is no major deviation from fair investigation, says the former IPS officer.

As new cases are being booked and arrests are made, those in power must also take note of the serious observations made by the National Commission for Women (NCW). The commission has red-flagged the pressure on a woman victim to file a complaint against the JDS leader.

Three individuals dressed in civil uniform, introducing themselves as Karnataka police officials, were allegedly forcing her to file a false complaint in the case. The commission has further stated that the woman was getting calls from random phone numbers threatening her to file a complaint. This is a serious matter.

Along with the SIT, the NCW and the State Women's Commission must do everything they can to help the women get justice and those accused of committing heinous crimes against women duly punished. Those in power in the state must ensure that citizens have trust in the system and the probe. It shouldn't reach a stage when everything is looked at only from the point of party politics.

BJP takes 5, leaves one for JDS in Council polls

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE BJP on Saturday announced its candidates for five out of six Legislative Council seats (three each of Graduates' and Teachers' constituencies), which will go to the polls on June 3. The BJP has allotted one seat to its ally JDS (South West Teachers' constituency, held by SL Bhoje Gowda).

The saffron party has renominated YA Narayanaswamy for the Karnataka South East Teachers' seat and A Deve Gowda from Bengaluru Graduates' seat.

For the South Teachers' constituency, which was held by JDS, the BJP has declared EC Ningaraju, a newbie who has his roots in the ABVP, as the candidate. Marithibbe Gowda, who had won the seat as a JDS candidate, recently resigned from the regional party, and is now the Congress candidate.

The JDS had plans to field either Srikante Gowda or businessman Vivekananda chosen by former CM HD Kumaraswamy. But now the JDS may not field its candidate owing to its alliance with the BJP. Sources, however, said that the JDS is still trying to get the seat and the party's leadership has spoken to BJP leader and former CM BS Yediyurappa.

The saffron party had earlier sacrificed the Bengaluru Teachers' constituency seat to the JDS in the by-elections held in February 2024. But BJP-JDS alliance candidate AP Ranganath lost to Congress candidate Puttanna.

The BJP has nominated Dr Dhanajaya Sirji for the South West Graduates' seat. Senior leader Ayanur Manjunath, who quit as the BJP MLC, will contest from the Congress against Sirji. For the North East Graduates' constituency, the BJP has fielded Amarnath Patil against Dr Chandrashekhar B Patil of the Congress.

NO THREAT TO THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN TWO PARTIES, SAYS YEDIYURAPPA

Mysuru: Former chief minister B S Yediyurappa said the BJP-JDS alliance will continue and it will fight the ensuing Legislative Council election. Clarifying that there is no threat to the alliance between the two parties, he said the BJP will contest four seats and the JDS would fight in two out of the six constituencies going for the polls in both the teachers' and graduates' constituency. However, no decision has been taken on which seats the BJP and JDS will fight. Speaking to the media persons here on Saturday, he said BJP national president J P Nadda will announce the seats that the BJP and JDS will contest. The former CM claimed that the NDA will win 400 seats and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will return for the third term. He said the BJP will win 24-25 seats in the state and the party is not worried about the Congress narrative . "There is no leader in the Congress who is qualified to become the PM," he said. Refuting comments by expelled BJP leader K S Eshwarappa, Yediyurappa said his son BY Raghavendra will win by a margin of 2.5 lakh votes. ENS

Cong may make Hassan sex scandal its poll plank

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Tumakuru

WITH BJP and JDS deciding to continue their alliance for elections to six seats of the Legislative Council on June 3, the ruling Congress is likely to make the Hassan sex scandal as its poll plank.

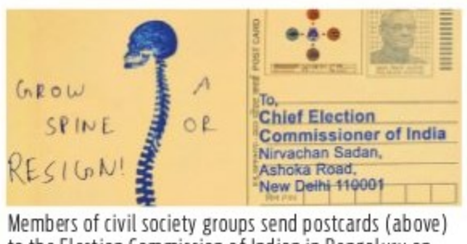
Hinting at it, KPCC media and communication wing chairman Ramesh Babu on Saturday taunted BJP and JDS over the sex scandal and sought to know whether they would launch a campaign highlighting Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna's (prime accused in the scandal) achievements.

"I welcome the BJP-JDS alliance and let them use the picture of Prajwal in their campaign and seek teachers' votes," he told reporters.

Babu launched the Congress campaign for its candidate for South East Teachers' constituency DT Srinivas in Tumakuru. On May 13, Srinivas will file his nomination papers in the presence of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and DCM DK Shivakumar in Bengaluru, he said. Babu, who won the February 2017 byelection from the South East Teachers' constituency on a JDS ticket, is back in the constituency to campaign for Srinivas, husband of former Hiriyur BJP MLA Poornima.

JDS leader HD Kumaraswamy's style of functioning forced not only him, but also many senior leaders such as SR Srinivas, Madhu Bangarappa, MC Nanaiah and PGR Sindhia to quit the party, he alleged.

Siddaramaiah allocated Rs 44,422 crore in the budget to the education sector and higher education minister MC Sudhakar resolved the problems of guest lecturers. All this will help the Congress candidate emerge victorious, he claimed.



Members of civil society groups send postcards (above) to the Election Commission of Indian in Bengaluru on Saturday | ALLEN EGENUS E J

Thousands send postcards to ECI asking it to 'wake up' over political hate speeches

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

RAISING their voices against "inaction" of the Election Commission of India (ECI) over politicians spewing hate speech while campaigning for the Lok Sabha elections, members of civil society groups and citizens queued up outside post offices and mail boxes to send postcards to the commission. The protest campaign was held across 11 cities in the country, including Bengaluru and Mysuru, around 11 am.

The #GrowASpineOrResign campaign revolved around citizens demanding the ECI to promote a free and fair election. The message was loud and clear through inked postcards that had a skull and a spine stamped on them and advocated for punitive action against hate speech by several BJP leaders, openly violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for the elections.

Vinay Kumar, an activist, said, "Whatever action the ECI has taken against hate speech is futile and useless and it has not deterred even the PM from making such statements. Moreover, the concern is that even after the election this will continue to have a long lasting impact on society."

Over 200 individuals in Bengaluru and thousands across the country have sent postcards designed by Vinay Kumar to the ECI asking it "to wake up and realise that it is an independent body and doesn't work for the government". The group also submitted a joint complaint to the Chief Electoral Officer in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Mumbai signed by 20 organisations, including lawyers, activists, filmmakers and citizens.

BJP WILL WIN 28 LS SEATS: SUNIL KUMAR; CONG WILL GET 18-21 IN K'TAKA: PRIYANK

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

AFTER the completion of Lok Sabha polls in the state, the leadership in both BJP and Congress is analysing and reviewing their performance and speculating possible outcomes. "We (BJP-JDS alliance) are in the mood of winning all the seats on the basis of people's response and three levels of campaigning," said BJP state General Secretary and Election Management Committee Coordinator V Sunil Kumar. He said the alliance is mutually beneficial to BJP and JDS candidates as leaders and workers from both parties coordinated well.

After a rigorous review of 40-day campaigning, he told reporters that the party's efforts to reach more people in a short time paid off. "We have done three types of public contact and conveyed our message through large public meetings, roadshows and door-to-door meetings," he explained.

He said 14 BJP national leaders participated in 79 public meetings. The roadshows were held at 39 places and around 30 state leaders addressed 557 meetings and held roadshows at 139 places, he said. Over 650 public meetings and more than 180 roadshows have been held, he added.

"Over 60,000 small meetings involving 50-75 people were held at all booths, where Congress' propaganda and dangers if it gets elected were conveyed," he added.

BJP filed 152 complaints with the Election Commission. Congress abused the government machinery in the election process by intimidating BJP workers, he said.

The Congress government will crumble because of the four-cornered fight between CM Siddaramaiah, DCM DK Shivakumar, ministers Satish Jarkiholi and Dr G Parameshwara, he said.

Meanwhile, RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge said on Saturday that Congress will win 18-21 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka. "We will contribute to the INDIA bloc by winning more seats from Karnataka with most coming from Mumbai-Karnataka and Kalyana-Karnataka," he said.

"BJP was frustrated and lost its spirit as the people blessed us, impressed by the five guarantees of our government. The blueprint for the development we put forth before the voters also helped us," he claimed. "Support for BJP, especially in cities, is quite but natural that can be attributed to people's hangover of Modi wave (of 2014 and 2019). But even in cities, their numbers will decline as we may win seats in Bengaluru too. We expect good results in Uttara Kannada, Dakshina Kannada and Dharwad that were termed RSS laboratories. As there was no Modi wave and no state BJP leadership, people have blessed us," he claimed.

BJP MLAs in touch with us: MB Patil

Large-scale Industries Minister MB Patil said that some BJP MLAs are in touch with Congress. Replying to speculation by JDS state president HD Kumaraswamy and BJP leaders that the Congress government may collapse after the Lok Sabha polls, he said it is impossible to bring down the government.

"It will require 60 MLAs from Congress to switch over to their side. Let them get 2-4 MLAs. In Maharashtra, two-thirds switched sides. If they dare to do so here, they will lose the MLA posts. Many BJP MLAs are with us and JDS is a sinking boat," he commented.

RE-TEST NEGATES MEASLE, RUBELLA REPORTS IN ODISHA

The health administration is in a fix after two samples that were claimed to be positive for measles and rubella (MR) in Nabarangpur district reportedly turned out negative during a revalidation test. As many as 18 samples were collected.

Poacher killed in gunbattle with Kaziranga guards

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @Guwahati

A POACHER was gunned down by the forest guards during an encounter in Assam's Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve on Saturday.

Some other suspected poachers, however, managed to flee. The incident took place at the park's Agaratoli range in the wee hours, park officials said.

Sonali Ghosh, who is the park's director, said patrolling and surveillance activities were stepped up earlier following receipt of intelligence inputs that the poachers might try to enter the park.

The authorities had also stationed some patrolling and surveillance parties in the fringe areas on May 10.

"In the early morning hours of May 11, a patrolling party stationed near Erasuti Anti-Poaching Camp under Agaratoli Range intercepted some unknown persons. When challenged, a fierce gun battle broke out. At first light around 5 am, the forest guards searched the area and the body of a poacher was recovered," Ghosh said.

A suspected modified .303 rifle along with live ammunition were also recovered from the scene, she added.

The body could not be identified while the locals said no person was missing from their villages, she said. When reports last came in, a search operation was being conducted with the help of the police.

A World Heritage Site, the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve has 2,613 rhinos as per the last count. The rhino is poached for its horn. A single horn could fetch ₹5 crore from the international black markets.

The park has the largest population of wild water buffalo accounting for about 57% of its world population. The park is also home to Royal Bengal Tiger, swamp deer, elephant, gaur, sambar, boar and hog deer.

Rhinos poached for horn

A World Heritage Site, the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve has 2,613 rhinos as per the last count. The rhino is poached for its horn. A single horn could fetch ₹5 crore from the international black markets. The park has the largest population of wild water buffalo, about 57% of its world population.

'US satisfied with Indian response in Pannun case'

Eric Garcetti says India buys Russian oil due to their historic ties

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti has said the country is satisfied with the responses India has shared on the Pannun case and the indictment.

"The US is satisfied with the accountability it has demanded from India regarding the allegations that its officials were involved in a plot to kill a Sikh separatist on American soil," Garcetti said during an event organised by the US think-tank Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), where he engaged in a discussion with Michael Froman, former US trade representative under the Obama Administration.

Garcetti also remarked that this indictment marked the first significant challenge in the India-US relationship.

"When I referred to a relationship that might encounter bumps along the road, this could potentially be the first major disagreement. So far, knock on wood, I would say the administration is satisfied with the accountability we have demanded on this matter, because this is a red line for America and our citizens," he added.

India has established a commission of inquiry, from which the US expects information.

Garcetti also expressed that everyone in India assumes Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be re-elected.

On human rights in India, Garcetti said that it was not America's responsibility to fix India but rather to engage with it and reflect US values.

Regarding the violence in Manipur, Garcetti admitted to seeing horrific images of women being dragged through streets, people being killed, and churches and temples being burnt. He said the US was ready to help if India asked.

Meanwhile, commenting on India's purchase of Russian oil, he noted India's historical ties with Russia since the 1970s. He emphasized that the purchase of Russian oil was not a violation but rather helped stabilise oil price in the global market.

Garcetti also discussed US and India's collaborative efforts in engaging with China and Russia on Ukraine during the G20 Summit.

On threats posed by China, he said, "When I go to the US Congress, they say, 'India needs to be with us on China,' and I respond, 'India banned TikTok four years ago. They lost soldiers on the frontlines in 2020, and they are the ones trying to tackle and engage with China."

(Pannun case) could potentially be the first major disagreement (with India). So far, knock on wood, I would say the administration is satisfied with the accountability we have demanded on this matter

Eric Garcetti, US Ambassador to India

NEERAJ CHOPRA

THE GOLD-MAN AND SUCH

INDRANEEL DAS

Mandar Pardikar

THE javelin touched 86.24m in his third throw to be placed in second place. Any mortal would have clenched his fist and yelled. Not Neeraj Chopra. On a slightly windy Doha night, the spear was not taking his command. He had a glum look; he craved to throw further. On good days, he never leaves it too late. Three throws are enough but in Doha on Friday, his last throw was the best. That's the two new sides of Neeraj. One, that wants to win every time he throws. The other? Saving the best for the last.

Just two centimetres separated the first and second throwers at the Doha Diamond League. On the scale of the universe, it is just a tiny speck. On the field of play, that margin is huge – it determines the positions you finish. It meant that Chopra finished behind Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch. 88.38m and 88.36m were the top two distances.

A second place may look a bit way off from the scripted tale but in the larger context of the season, with the Olympics just over two months away, this is just as good. After all, life is not measured in metres and centimetres but a sum of all good things and mundane. Yet for a world accustomed to seeing Neeraj on the top step of the podium, second seemed a tad miserable. Such is the craze and expectation in this Olympic sports-star-starved nation that a small two-centimetre separation was enough to cause consternation and anxiety.

Like his coach Klaus Bartonietz always says, the season opener can be tricky. It's a competition where you put your training to test. "Consistency has been my strong point and maybe, this is one of my greatest strengths. I will throw over 90m but consistency is more important," he had said a day before the Doha DL.

Neeraj never ceases to amaze. Ever since he was crowned the Olympic Champion in Tokyo in 2021, his confidence has been running high. In a recent interaction too, he had spoken about how he expects to win every time he competes. There is a complete transformation in the way he has been competing too.

After the Tokyo high, he was crowned the world champion in Budapest last year. In between Tokyo and Budapest, he was crowned the Diamond League champion. Sometimes, it seems he has the Midas touch. Whatever he has been touching has turned into gold. Like, he said, before the season: "The confidence level is high. And I expect to win every time I throw in a competition. I have won quite a few events as well. I won the silver and gold at the World Championships, and Diamond League Trophy and threw well and retained the Asian Games crown. So it was good. Mentally and physically, I think I'm prepared for the Olympics."

Neeraj still feels there's a lot to achieve. "I don't think I will say that I am the greatest of all time because there's always some effort left to perform better. Everyone used to say that the Worlds gold was left but I feel even now, I have to improve a lot. The greatest of all time is perhaps like (Jan) Zelezny," he had said.

Zelezny is considered to be the gold standard in men's javelin.

NEWSMAKER

Arguably, Chopra is already one of the best Olympic athletes the country has produced. His effect is there for the world to see. Apart from Chopra, two other men have qualified (Kishore Jena and DP Manu). All these are positives and he hoped to inspire more in the years to come. Neeraj would love to silence the 90m debate as well.

"The most important competition for me is the Paris Olympics, but Diamond League meetings are important too. This was the opener for me this season, I finished second with a narrow two-centimetre margin, but next time I will try to draw far and try to win."

Win it is.

PM Narendra Modi at a public meeting in Kandhamal in Odisha on Saturday | PTI

Cong creating fear psychosis over Pak atom bomb: Modi

BIJOY PRADHAN @ Bhubaneswar

UNRELENTING in his attack on the Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said as it is staring at its worst defeat in the ongoing general elections, the grand old party has begun to scare the people of the country on the nuclear capabilities of Pakistan.

Addressing three back-to-back election rallies in the second leg of his poll campaign in the state, Modi at his Phulbani meeting said "The party will not be even able to claim Opposition status this time. Its strength will go further down after June 4. It will be restricted to less than 50 seats for the third time in a row."

To keep its vote bank happy, the Congress is finding new ways to create fear psychosis in the minds of the people. "Time and again, Congress has tried to scare the country. They have advised the people to tread cautiously as Pakistan has atom bomb. These people, who are virtually dead, are trying to kill the soul of the country," Modi said in a reference to senior Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar's recent "Pakistan has an atom bomb" remark.

Aiyar had recently said that India should start dialogue with Pakistan as it was a nuclear power and could drop atom bomb on our country.

"On the other hand, on this day 26 years ago, the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had conducted a series of nuclear tests at Pokhran and shown the world how his government was strong enough to ensure the safety and security of the country," Modi said.

Taking this forward, the prime minister said the condition of the neighbouring country is such that they don't know how to keep their (nuclear) stockpiles. They are looking to sell their bombs but there are no buyers, he said.

"Due to such Congress' mindset, the people of Jammu and Kashmir struggled for decades. They faced terrorism for 60 years. India will never forget the times when India used to have frequent terrorist attacks and the Congress leaders used to sit with the perpetrators of the crimes.

Video shot while being tortured

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

AFTER reaching Hagarga road, Ramesh and his associates, who were waiting there, attacked Arjun and his friends and took them to a house in a remote place.

In his police complaint, Arjun stated that the accused, including Ramesh, demanded that he pay them a cut in the profit he made in his used car business. They also stripped him and his friends, assaulted them and gave electric shocks to their private parts, Arjun said.

One of the accused video recorded while he and his friends were being tortured, Arjun said.

After a probe, the university police arrested Ramesh and his associates – Imran Patel, Mohammad Mateen, Mohammed Ziaul-Hussain, Mohammed Afzal Sheikh, Hussain Sheikh, and Sagar.

Thundershowers, yet K'taka to face pre-monsoon deficit

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

IN the last 17 days, Karnataka has received good rains, owing to which the rainfall deficit has reduced by half. However, officials in the India Meteorological Department (IMD) say that the rainfall in the coming weeks is unlikely to be enough to fill the deficit before the onset of the southwest monsoon.

According to IMD data, Karnataka, during the pre-monsoon period between March 1 and May 11, received 31.5 mm of rainfall as against the normal 63.3 mm.

The highest rainfall deficiency of 76% has been reported in Dakshin Kannada district. The coastal district got 25.6 mm of rain as against the normal 106.7 mm. Coastal Karnataka on the whole saw a 53% deficit in rain. The region received 28.5 mm of rain, against the normal 60.5 mm. South-interior Karnataka too saw a rain deficit of 58%. The region received 33.9 mm of rain, against the normal 81 mm. North-interior Karnataka recorded 32% deficiency as it received 39.4 mm of rainfall as against the normal 43.3mm. Bengaluru Rural and Urban districts saw rainfall deficiency of 51% and 54%, respectively. Chamarajanagar and Chikkaballapura districts recorded a 75% deficit in rainfall. In Mysuru and Mandya districts, there is a 44% and 52% rainfall deficiency, respectively.

IMD officials say the pre-monsoon showers had a delayed start, and so far, Karnataka has received 31.5 mm of rain. From April 25 to May 1, there was a 97% deficiency in rainfall. Nearly all parts of Karnataka started receiving rainfall only from May 1.

However, despite an increase in thundershowers in most parts of the state, it is unlikely that it will close the gap. The formation of weather systems will have to be assessed until the onset of the southwest monsoon. Rain is forecast for the next 3–4 days, after which the systems will again have to be studied.

Cameras to assess climate change in K'taka forests

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

CLIMATE change is real, and so is its impact. To assess this effectively, three cameras are being installed, and centres are being established in the forests of Karnataka for the first time.

Karnataka is home to the largest portion of the fragile and UNESCO-designated heritage site, the Western Ghats. The ghats is also not spared from the impact of climate change, rapid urbanisation, a decline in green cover, and a change in land use.

To study the impact of climate change, the Department of Science and Technology under the Ministry of Science and Technology, along with the Environmental Management and Policy Research Institute (EMPRI) and Karnataka Forest Department, came together for a five-year-long climate change study by setting up centres in the evergreen and dry deciduous forests of Nagarahole, Dandeli, and Shivamogga.

"It is a five-year-long study starting in 2023–24. Last year, a baseline data base was prepared for the study, the locations were studied, and areas were shortlisted. By the end of May, the cameras will be installed. Earlier, Bannerghatta National Park was identified for the study but was dropped as it did not fit the required criteria. The entire project costs Rs 2.19 crore, and each camera costs Rs 15 lakh. The cameras will be installed in anti-poaching camps and inspection bungalows. The natural habitat of the area is not being disturbed for this. They are being set up at canopy level," an official told *The New Sunday Express*.

The study will be done all 365 days of the year, 24x7. Teams from the State and Union government agencies are part of the study. They will be collecting data and images on a daily basis for assessment. Detailed workshops and training have been done for the study over the last year.

The official added that 42 government departments, including agriculture, horticulture, energy, and even irrigation, have been involved in the study, and EMPRI will be the nodal agency. "Each department was told to prepare a database. This study will help them assess the impact of climate change on their sectors and, hence, help in preparing better management plans. "Through the study, soil, nutrients, vegetation, leaf change and leaf litter, carbon in the soil, change in cropping pattern, season change, and seasonal impact will be studied," the official added.

No power, water for 18 hrs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THE students claimed that the two overhead tanks installed at the hostel were not sufficient for 600 inmates.

On Saturday, power and water were unavailable for 18 hours, which led to the protest. Exams will begin from Monday for second year students and from Tuesday for first year students.

Ranjita, a first year MA student, said she was admitted to the hostel six months ago. "I haven't seen the warden since then. The mess is unclean. Even the kitchen is not kept in a hygienic condition. Water purifiers do not function properly," she added.

However, Vice-Chancellor Jayakara SM said, "We have taken immediate action to address the students' problems. Water is being supplied through a tanker. Additionally, we're planning to drill a borewell to ease the water shortage."

ACCUSED IN KODAGU MURDER CASE NABBED, LOADED GUN SEIZED

PRAJNA GR @ Madikeri

THE man, who had allegedly murdered a Class 10 girl and fled with her severed head at Surlabbi village in Kodagu on Thursday night, was arrested at Garvale on Saturday morning. He was carrying a loaded gun when he was arrested. The severed head was recovered nearly 100 metres away from the crime spot. The accused had hidden it inside a shrub.

The accused, **Prakash Onkarappa**, 34, of Hammiyala village in Madikeri taluk, was produced before a local court, which remanded him in judicial custody. He has been booked under Sections 320, 307, POCSO Act and the Arms Act.

Addressing reporters here, SP K Ramarajan said the accused was desperate to marry the victim. The engagement ceremony was held after the announcement of SSLC results on May 9. While the girl celebrated after securing 50.24% marks in the SSLC examination, her parents fixed her engagement with Prakash the same day. "The ceremony took place between 11 am and 1 pm. However, after a villager alerted the child helpline, officials from the social welfare department visited the girl's house the same day." he said.

The officials counselled the girl's parents and the accused's family to arrange the wedding only after the girl turned 18. The officials returned after both families agreed. Within a couple of hours, Prakash returned to the girl's house and forced her parents to get her married to him. "When the victim's mother opposed, Prakash assaulted her. Later, he dragged the girl out and severed her head with a machete," Ramarajan said.

After killing the girl, Prakash went to his house and escaped with the gun. He had planned to murder the girl's elder sister, who he thought had informed the child helpline—K Ramajan, SP

Prakash took the machete from the victim's house. After killing her, Prakash fled with the victim's head. However, he was arrested at Garvale near Surlabbi and a loaded gun was seized from him. "After killing the girl, Prakash went to his house and escaped with the gun. He had planned to murder the girl's elder sister, who he thought had informed the child helpline," the SP said.

Words ought to be a little wild, for they are the assault of thoughts on the unthinking

John Maynard Keynes

RAGING RHETORIC, RASH OF RUMOURS AND FEAR INDEX

THE THIRD EYE

SHANKKAR AIYAR
Author of *The Gated Republic*, *Aadhaar: A Biometric History of India's 12 Digit Revolution*, and *Accidental India*
(shankkar.aiyar@gmail.com)

THE speculations market is on fire as punts are threatened by raging rhetoric and a rash of rumours, theories and reveries. The cognoscenti are harbouring doubts and making acquaintance with nervousness. On Thursday, the benchmark Sensex slid over 1,000 points and the India VIX volatility index—the stock market's Fear Index—attained a 19-month high this week. Data-dependent denizens, corporate tsars and investment bankers, who devour Peter Drucker and Peter Lynch, are speed-dialling and googling for insights on hearsay and heretical commentary.

Suddenly, the buzz catchers in the financial world are checking the odds at the Phalodi satta bazaar. They are seeking the views of pollsters on any signals off the exit polls. They are worried about implications of the Nitish effect on the Bihar tally. They are seeking answers about the Sena vs Sena and Pawar vs Pawar battles, and the erosion-of-seats count in Maharashtra. They are asking questions about whispers of possible losses in Gujarat, of four to five unsure seats in Rajasthan. Used to a world of incentives and motivation, they wonder if the guarantees provided by the Congress in Karnataka are outweighing Modi's guarantees.

Sometime in September 2023, a senior investment banker who was returning from a dinner of high net-worth individuals, called to air a question. Was there any risk of the BJP not returning to power? The poser was triggered by the formation of the opposition alliance in Patna. A 10-year reign's anti-incumbency was always going to be challenging. But it was too early for any determination of a trend. A few months later, the BJP swept the assembly elections in the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, settling the doubts.

It is useful to recall the statistics of the BJP-led NDA's 2019 victory. The alliance swept up all the 26 seats Gujarat, won 41 of the 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra, 39 of the 40 seats in Bihar, 25 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, 24 of the 25 seats in Rajasthan, 28 of the 29 seats in Madhya Pradesh, and 9 of the 11 seats in Chhattisgarh. Modi Magic had taken the count of seats with 50-plus percent votes from 136 in 2014 to 224 in 2019, and the victory in the Hindi belt held the potential of a sweep in the crucial 200-odd seats where the BJP was in direct contest with the Congress.

In February 2024, the BJP scintillated its core constituency with a playbook promising '*Abki baar*, 400 *paar*'. The promise was backed by the euphoria which followed the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya and the promise of a uniform civil code energised the core constituency. It was scaffolded by the large base of welfare beneficiaries and riveted to the promise of Viksit Bharat by 2047. The focus on investment-led growth catapulted the stock market indices to new highs, thrilling the investor community.

Cut to May 2024. What changed in the intervening weeks to catalyse the new questions? There is much bafflement among punters and the general public about the shift in campaign strategy. Following the spectre of low voter turnout in the first phase, the BJP's campaign rhetoric has focused on the deployment of euphemisms of identity, resulting in a greater degree of polarisation. There is also a recurring hum of and curiosity about a rift in the Sangh parivar. The notion is contestable given that the Modi regime has delivered on the key aspirations of the RSS—the abrogation of Article 370 and consecration of the Ram temple—and promises to unveil more.

The debate among punters—and pollsters and pundits—is whether the shift in strategy will consolidate the core but alienate the swing voter. Arguably, for the players the questions are less about voting intent and more about market position. Those long on Modinomics are sussing up the landscape if they must go short on their punts. For sure, nobody is as yet calling or predicting a grand upset—the worst-case scenario envisaged is that the outcome will be closer to 2014's. There is no escaping, though, that the high-velocity attacks are engineering a perception of vulnerability among believers and atheists.

There is cause of concern beyond partisan politics. India is the largest democracy. The largest election in the world has over 960 million voters eligible to exercise their right of choice on how they want to be governed; of this, over 18 million are first-time voters seeking a vision for their future. This week, Elections 2024 will witness voting in 96 constituencies in Phase IV—with votes already cast in 285 constituencies, we are past the halfway mark.

Theory has it that election campaigns are about ideas to resolve the dilemmas of competing compulsions and conflicting crises. Instead, the campaign—across party lines—has yo-yoed between claims and counterclaims, exposés and denials. The blitzkrieg of sloganeering has scarcely helped the cause of voter enthusiasm.

Nobel laureate Herbert Simon had once memorably observed that a surfeit of information creates a poverty of attention. The principle conceptualised by Simon owes its origin to public policy design—the impact of incomplete information and the implications for outcomes—and the construct applies to election campaigns too. The quality of campaigns and the nature of debates have left the voter wondering if his/her choice is being informed.

DEMONISING IS DEMEANING DEMOCRACY

POWER & POLITICS

PRABHU CHAWLA
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"Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters."

—Abraham Lincoln

"When widely-followed public figures feel free to say anything, without any fact-checking, it becomes impossible for a democracy to think intelligently about big issues."

—Thomas L Friedman

ISSUES are dead, interred in the political graveyard of noxious nonsense. Slander has taken over. The meandering narrative of the current Lok Sabha elections has reduced a titanic exercise involving more than 900 million voters into a constitutional formality by integrating incessant invective inbred with indiscreet innovations, instead of upholding its topic-based elocution analogy.

The battle began on a high moral ground. A fight between Viksit Bharat by 2047 and Nyay for All. A mirror that reflects a Leader who Delivers vs Adversaries who Divide. For weeks, issues were confined to electing a government that governs, and dumping a party that destroys democratic institutions. BJP's campaign began on a high note, as both the party and the prime minister unleashed their vikas astra of achieving a developed India by 2047. No saffron leader let an opportunity pass without counting the sarkar's successes during the past decade. They publicised achievements such as constructing 35 km of national highways per day, 100 new airports, minimising terror attacks and communal riots, ensuring record growth rates and enhancing India's acceptability as a major diplomatic and economic voice at international forums.

The golden pledge of 'Modi *ki* guarantee' was a call to trust a leader who delivered more than what he promised over a decade. The opposition parties, meanwhile, stuck to their accomplishments when they were in power and what would do if re-elected. When Modi blamed the Gandhi parivar for India's ills, the Congress used their icons to reinforce the fact that the foundations of democratic and industrial India were laid by its founders.

So far, so good. Then came the summer of malcontents. The heat and dust infected political mindsets metaphorically, too—they lost the big picture and started bickering over inane issues. It has turned into a scrimmage between two negative narratives. By the time voting for more than half the Lok Sabha seats was over, the contretemps between political rivals had turned toxic. Political leaders, their followers and sponsored social influencers splattered memes and media masala to lower the tone along caste and communal lines, using shamelessly competitive and disruptive denigration.

SOURAV ROY

Election 2024 is now a personal feud. Minorities, mangalsutras and mandirs have become the stigmata of political crucifixion. The battle is down to a fight between Marauding Modi and Rehearsing Rahul. In the process, Modi has defined Rahul and the Congress as his biggest adversaries. He said: "For five years, the Congress *shehzada* kept chanting one thing. After his Rafale issue was grounded, he started a new chant. Five industrialists, five industrialists, five industrialists. Gradually, he started saying Ambani-Adani. But ever since the elections were announced, he stopped abusing Ambani and Adani. Today I want to ask from Telangana's soil, he must declare how much money they have taken from Ambani, Adani. Was there a deal? Why did you stop abusing Ambani and Adani overnight? *Zaroor daal mein kuchh kaala hai* (something is wrong)." Even hardcore Modi admirers were surprised. Modi chose Telangana for this verbal vilification because the Congress-run state recently signed numerous memorandums with the Adani Group for investments of over ₹12,500 crore.

Amit Shah, BJP's master strategist, made it clear that the current election was between Modi and Rahul: "The 2024 election is a Rahul Gandhi versus Narendra Modi election. It is an election that pits 'vote for *jihad*' against 'vote for vikas'." His twist in the tiger's tail: the voter must choose between Modi's "Bharatiya guarantee" and Rahul's "Chinese guarantee". Shah has been setting the tone for a Hindutva-driven ideological charge using luridsaffron prose. Though he was speaking in Telangana, his message was meant for BJP cadres nationwide. He visualised a "triangle of appeasement" between the Congress, BRS and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, saying, "These people don't allow the celebration of Hyderabad Liberation Day (September 17). They want to run Telangana on the basis of Sharia and Quran."

A newly-converted BJP MP from Maharashtra, Navneet Rana, took the polarisation piffle forward while campaigning for her party's candidate in Hyderabad. She lampooned an inflammatory remark Akbaruddin Owaisi made in 2013, "The younger brother (Owaisi) said, 'Remove police for 15 minutes so we can show what we can do.' I want to tell him, 'It might take you 15 minutes, but it will only take us 15 seconds'." She claimed the BJP candidate Madhavi Latha would "definitely stop Hyderabad from turning into Pakistan" and warned anyone voting for the Congress or AIMIM would be voting for Pakistan.

The PM's slogan of '*Abki baar*, 400 *paar*' was paraded by prominent BJP leaders to promote a religious agenda, which wasn't Modi's original intention. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the raucously rising star in the saffron firmament, asserted in Odisha: "People ask us why we want 400 seats. We have to make sure Babri Masjid is never rebuilt in India. This is why we have to give PM Modi more than 400 seats... The Congress knows we are not going to stop at the Ram temple, we have to get every temple in our country released."

The opposition parties aren't holding their fire. Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut from the Udhav Thackeray faction tastelessly compared Modi and Aurangzeb, and predicted a similar fate for the PM. Mamata Banerjee, who is under tremendous political and agency pressure, called BJP netas "*looteras*" out to destroy West Bengal; she called Modi "*Insaan-hatya ka saudagar*", rudely reminiscent of Sonia Gandhi's "*Maut ka saudagar*" obloquy that boomeranged. Priyanka and Rahul Gandhi were not far behind in making fun of Modi with social media jokes and poll platform platitudes.

Have our loquacious leaders forgotten that foul mouths and fouler methods don't win elections? Modi took the 2014 win on an anti-corruption plank. In 2019, he got a record mandate even after Rahul coined the slogan '*Chowkidar chor hai*'. The real *chowkidars* of democracy are the people of India. Every five years, they venture out from million-dollar villas, apartments, slums, villages and small farms to make up the decisive multitude determining the fate of the governing class. They are an army whose power can make or break governments. The people of India see voting as a day of empowerment, not a power grab. They expect clean voices and cleaner governance.

Just before India's independence, Churchill had arrogantly wailed, "Power will go to the hands of rascals, rogues, freebooters. They will fight amongst themselves for power and India will be lost in political squabbles." In these days of anti-colonialism fervour, it would be a pity if Winston got it right. Fortunately, a united and prospering India is in much safer hands for now.

THE CANNES AND CAN'T OF INDIAN FILMDOM

OPINION

NAMRATA JOSHI
Consulting Editor
Follow her on X @Namrata_Joshi

CAN we talk about this?" began a provocative Instagram post from actor Tanmay Dhanania shortly after his film, *The Shameless*, directed by Bulgarian filmmaker Konstantin Bojanov, was selected in the Un Certain Regard section of the Cannes Film Festival, which begins May 14.

Dhanania wanted to point out the power imbalance between Indians who get to attend Cannes and those who can't. While the cast and crew of films like his are forced to scrounge around to get together the money for the trip, "people who have nothing to do with the festival, who have no films there, who don't know what cinema means, let alone indie cinema, get sponsored". Dhanania compared it, rather bitingly, to a circus troupe being special invitees to the Olympics instead of the athletes.

He was referring to the star ambassadors of the various beauty and fashion brands who are flown into Cannes from India, among other countries, every year to walk the red carpet and pose for shutterbugs. Add to that the social media influencers who crashed the party last year on the French Riviera, faffing around on random panels and posing on the red carpet when no one was quite looking at them. However, their enormous fan bases and the celeb-hungry media were all agog back home.

This is not to diminish the clout and reach of stars and influencers. They have helped make Cannes a household word in India even though its correct pronunciation might be up for debate. At a time the number of hits, engagements and virality of content gets valued way more than quality, it's perhaps fitting for Cannes to do with some outreach beyond the bubble of the converted. Also, the red carpet is serious business and the various brand associations keep the wheels of the festival moving, helping bring cinema to the cinephile.

A regular at Cannes knows that there exists a separation between the church and the state. For those devouring films, nothing else matters. For the majority, the game is all about waking up early, booking tickets online for their favourites and then queuing up outside Grand Theatre Lumière, Salle Debussy *et al* to view them. One can only hope that a bit of that passion for cinema also finds its place in the middle of the hullabaloo over gowns and tuxedos. All the more so in a year Cannes is laying out the choicest of films with an India connection. "Historically, China and India are important markets for films. They are making a marked comeback to Cannes," said general delegate Thierry Fremaux while announcing the year's programme.

Indeed, 2024 is a historic year that marks a record India presence. We have a film in competition after 30 years of Shaji Karun's *Swaham*. Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light* is competing with the likes of Sean Baker's *Anora*, Francis Ford Coppola's *Megalopolis*, David Cronenberg's *The Shrouds*, Jia Zhang-ke's *Caught by the Tides*, Yorgos Lanthimos's *Kinds of Kindness*, Mohammad Rasoulof's *The Seed of the Sacred Fig*, Paul Schrader's *Oh Canada* and Paolo Sorrentino's *Parthenope*.

Cannes has become as much a place for influencers to get clicked on the red carpet as for cinephiles to gorge on world cinema. This year marks a record Indian presence at the festival

There are other Indian films too in the official selection—Sandhya Suri's *Santosh* and the restored print of Shyam Benegal's classic, *Manthan*. It's the third year in a row for Shivendra Singh Dungarpur's Film Heritage Foundation to have its restoration work platformed at Cannes, after G Aravindan's *Thampu* in 2022 and Aribam Syam Sharma's *Ishanou* last year. FTII student Chidananda Naik's Kannada short, *Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know,* competes in the LaCinef student section.

Three films play in the independent sidebars—Maisam Ali's *In Retreat*, Karan Kandhari's *Sister Midnight*, and *Nightbirds*, for which Indian filmmaker Ashok Vish collaborated with Maria Estela Paiso of the Philippines.

Beyond films, iconic cinematographer Santosh Sivan will be honoured at the prestigious Pierre Angenieux Tribute ceremony. As we go to press, Apoorva Charan, producer of the much-acclaimed Pakistani film *Joyland*, who has her roots in Hyderabad, has been chosen as a fellow for the Cannes Producers Network Programme.

"This time, it's extra special. So many films with India connection, so many close friends... It really feels like a team is going," wrote Dhanania. There are other things to note, too. Most of the films are either helmed by women or are women-centric. Kapadia, Ali and Naik are all FTII graduates. And almost all of the films are co-productions, pointing at the universal reception of Indian stories.

Neecha Nagar is the only Indian film to have won the Palme d'Or. How will the current lot do? Will they get accolades and awards? Will they generate enough buzz? For now, the world's a stage for Team India at Côte d'Azur.

QUOTE CORNER

I don't see any difference between the Congress and us... Ideologically, we belong to the Gandhi-Nehru line of thinking. I am not saying anything now. Any decision on strategy or the next steps will be taken collectively. It is difficult to adjust [with] or digest Modi.

Sharad Pawar, 83, who founded the Nationalist Congress Party after splitting from the Congress in 1999; now his own party has been split by his nephew

That wasn't just a little message. That wasn't just a murmur. That was a shout... The whole country is saying we've had enough now, after 14 years of failure, 14 years of decline.

Keir Starmer, UK Labour leader, after victories in mayoral contests against the Tories

Real men respond to testimony by being sworn in and taking the stand in court. Oh... wait. Nevermind.

Stormy Daniels, on X after testifying at a criminal trial of Donald Trump, on the ex-president's habit of making baseless claims on social media

MAILBAG

WRITE TO letters@newindianexpress.com

Khrushchev repartee

While reading about Nikita Khrushchev's speech in K M Chandrasekhar's column, I remembered something I'd read long ago. One person in the audience asked after the speech, "Where were you when Stalin was ruling?" Khrushchev asked the person to stand up, but no one did. Then he responded, "I too was in this person's position." For us in the subcontinent, our ethos lie in what our elders left. It is entirely different from what is practised outside, be it in governance or religious beliefs.

A Rajakumar, email

Cult product

Ref: *What history teaches us about personality cults* (May 11). Without naming Narendra Modi, the writer has obliquely called him a personality cult product and, in effect, a dictator. He admitted that Indira Gandhi was a dictator because she declared Emergency. Was not Jawaharlal Nehru, too, the product of a personality cult? Was he elected prime minister by the people of India in 1947? In contrast, Modi has been elected twice.

Shreeram Paranjpe, email

Timely breather

The AAP in particular, and the opposition camp in general, got a much-needed breather at an opportune moment in the form of Arvind Kejriwal's interim bail. It's a right decision of the highest judicial body to grant him bail taking his peculiar position into account. Kejriwal might get few more positive responses at the hustings now. But he cannot blame his arrest entirely on the central agencies, as he gave them the chance by not obeying summons for nine times.

D V G Sankara Rao, Vizianagaram

Kejriwal's re-entry

The low turnout is a worry for both parties and the Election Commission. Perhaps single-party dominance has affected the psyche of an electorate that craves to be a part of the process rather than merely registering a choice on an allotted day. Kejriwal's re-entry into the fray, enabled by a prescient Supreme Court, must be as much a relief to the EC as to the voter. It may ignite fresh enthusiasm.

R Narayanan, Navi Mumbai

Caesar's wife

Ref: *Frame sexual harassment charges against BJP MP* (May 11). Caesar's wife must be above suspicion. An MP, elected by a constituency of lakhs of voters, should be above criminality. With a Delhi court framing sexual assault charges against BJP leader Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, he might have no room to escape because the evidence seems strong.

Ravi Nair, Palakkad

Delhi durbar

It's ironic that Telangana CM Revanth Reddy is fuming—just like his predecessor KCR—against Narendra Modi and Amit Shah for 'Gujarati dominance', dubbing the duo 'Delhi sultans' to stir up local sentiments. This trolling won't be taken even with a pinch of salt, since no Congress leader can take any decision without bowing to the dictates of the Gandhi trio from the same Delhi.

U Atreya Sarma, Hyderabad

Drive through

Trade unions in Kerala are protesting transport minister K B Ganesh Kumar's reform of the driving licence test. The state witnesses more road accidents than the national average. Most of them result from rule violations or lack of proper driving skills. The union's demand is their business, not in the interest of the public. The government ought to go ahead with the reforms.

Bijumon P N, Idukki

Balan's sarcasm

When asked about a family vacation the Kerala CM took while a party meeting was scheduled, Marxist leader A K Balan said, "Even god takes rest, why not Pinarayi?" Though he said it in humour, the effect was sarcastic and reflected the general apathy of party workers towards Pinarayi's sojourn.

Asokakumar, Thrikkunnapuzha

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POSTS OF THE DAY

Mallikarjun Kharge @kharge
Congress resolves to make India a manufacturing hub by raising the share of manufacturing from 14% to 20% of GDP in the next 5 years

P. Chidambaram @PChidambaram_IN
I am amused by the Prime Minister's statement at Hyderabad that "Congress wants to treat Hindus as second class citizens in their own country"

Akhilesh Yadav @yadavakhilesh
The 2024 LLS election is a historic election, which is an election to protect the Constitution and socialist values. That is why your active cooperation is expected.

'STRONG MODI WAVE IN COUNTRY. NDA ALL SET TO CROSS 400 MARK'

IT IS ONLY CONGRESS THAT CAN DIVIDE EVEN THE POOR BETWEEN HINDUS AND MUSLIMS, WE WILL NOT LET IT HAPPEN

EXPRESS INTERVIEW

THE CONGRESS HAS A GENERATIONAL HISTORY OF NOT FULFILLING MANIFESTO PROMISES

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah, who is also the BJP's principal strategist, asserts that the NDA will reach its target of a bumper majority and form the next government at the Centre. He alleges the Congress wants to snatch away the reservation given to SCs, STs and OBCs and give it away to the Muslim community—without conducting any survey—citing Karnataka and Telangana as examples of its "appeasement" politics. On the other hand, he claims, "the BJP has never ever wanted to amend Constitution for altering reservation provisions." In the midst of hectic campaigning, Shah gave an in-depth interview to **TNIE Editor SANTWANA BHATTACHARYA** and **Senior Assistant Editor RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR**. To buttress his point, he points out that the BJP/NDA has had the strength in Parliament to amend the Constitution for the past 10 years. "We never did, as that was never our intention. What we believe in, we always put out in our 'sankalp patra'—like Article 370, Ram Mandir or UCC. We don't work surreptitiously." **Excerpts**:

Three phases of elections are over, four more to go. What's your view on the low turnout—heat or apathy? The Congress cites it to say it's already winning. You say the NDA has already touched 190. What do you really feel? Is "400 paar" really possible?

BJP WILL EMERGE AS THE BIGGEST PARTY IN SOUTH INDIA

This time, a cleaning up of the electoral rolls—removing those who have died etc—perhaps could not be done properly. It's usually a routine exercise carried out between general elections. In my own colony in Gandhinagar, the names of over 14 voters who have died are still on the rolls. It seems to me that might account for the low polling to some extent. Secondly, in many constituencies, the people feel there is no contest. In the North, East, West and in parts of the South, this feeling of there being 'no real contest' is affecting turnouts. Anyway, we are leading in wherever voting has happened so far.

But crossing 400?
It is indeed possible. I can tell you about the states where we will increase numbers. In West Bengal, we will win around 30 seats. In Bihar, our position is likely to remain around the same as 2019. In Odisha, we can reach 16 or go a little further ahead. In Telangana, we can reach 10-12. In Andhra Pradesh, the NDA will be close to 17-18. Our accounts will be opened in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Even in the Northeast, we will do very well.

The Opposition is saying the NDA wants 400 seats so as to be in a position to change the Constitution and end reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs. How do you respond?
We had the power to amend the Constitution since 2014. But we never did it. We have been in the Centre for 10 years and have not touched reservation. On the contrary, the Congress has reduced the quota for SCs, STs and OBCs by giving reservation to Muslims in Karnataka and Telangana from the same quota. We've not done anything of that sort.

The PM did say there would be a 'big decision' and it was interpreted as...
...because of the Congress's mentality. The Uniform Civil Code was a big decision, removal of triple talaq was a big decision, so was Article 370. To end constitutionally mandated reservation is neither on our agenda nor do we want to do it. If Congress sees only 'reservation', we do not have any cure for it.

Your government has turned Rahul Gandhi's phrase—"X-ray of India"—to invoke a fear of Muslim takeover. But isn't high poverty among Muslims a fact? You do place the historical blame for that on the Congress. Should that not be righted?
For them, an X-ray of Indian households does not mean (socio-economic) survey. What they actually mean is sampatti (property/assets). Rahul Gandhi wants an X-ray of sampatti to distribute it to those who don't have it. Dr Manmohan Singh had already declared the Congress's priority, in his famous 'right to resources' remark. Their priority is Muslims for votes, not development. There is no question of us creating a fear psychosis. It is in their thinking to create a miasma of fear. How can you divide the poor into Hindu/Muslim? Is that right? Modiji has said we are empowering the poor—it's a holistic approach.

You accuse southern states of giving reservations to backward Muslims. But OBC Muslims are getting benefits even in Gujarat. If the BJP thinks it's unconstitutional, why did you not adopt a legal path to abolish it?
Some Muslim castes are there in Gujarat. But in Karnataka, without any survey, they declared the entire Muslim community as backward, even those who are millionaires. How can a millionaire Muslim be treated as backward? They have done reservation on the basis of religion. Among Hindus too, only some castes are backwards. Can we put all Hindus in the backwards category? Will the Congress do it to Hindus too? What they have done is unconstitutional. Poverty or backwardness can be an index of consideration, not religion. Our constitution does not allow it.

To what extent is the Ram temple issue helping the BJP?
The Ram temple has always been a matter of faith for us, not an election issue. But people have understood the Congress had been hindering temple construction for so many years. They have seen how Modi ji solved this vexed issue harmoniously. However, for the Congress, it is an electoral issue. The Congress leadership did not come for the consecration, fearing it might upset their voter base. They harassed and expelled party leaders and members for visiting Ayodhya. All this is unlikely to go down well with Ram devotees.

You talk of the Uniform Civil Code and say the Congress is invoking religion-based personal laws...
Look, the UCC is not an agenda of the BJP only. It is an agenda of the Indian Constitution. Our Constitution- makers had kept it pending only to wait for the right time. We have initiated it in Uttarakhand. In our sankalp patra, we say we will try to bring it across India in the next five years. The UCC is a big social reform. I think there should be wider discussions as well as scrutiny on its social, religious and judicial points. The Uttarakhand has put up a model; naturally, it may be challenged and scrutinised. Many people, especially Muslim representatives, have problems with it. I think it must be implemented across the country.

Initially, the BJP campaign was focused on development and welfare. But gradually, words like Muslim, Pakistan etc started figuring prominently. Why this shift? Don't these issues polarise the electorate and divert from what could be the focus: the Modi government's actions on the economic front?
Our achievements are visible to everyone, even without publicity. The commoners are living this change and benefiting from it. This success has been attained through immense hard work. In the last 10 years, India has jumped several notches to become the 5th largest economy in the world, up from 11th. By 2025, India is slated to become a $5 trillion economy. Soon, we will become the world's third-largest economy. FDI has doubled from $305 billion to $600 billion. Exports have increased from $446 billion to $775 billion. Per capita income has increased from Rs 68,000 to Rs 2.14 lakh. GDP has grown from $1.86 trillion to $3.73 trillion. Inflation has dipped from 6.67 per cent to 5 per cent—a 25 per cent reduction. The biggest beneficiaries of this stupendous growth are the people, and they want the Modi government to return to office to fulfil their aspiration of making Bharat a developed nation by 2047.

WE HAVE INCREASED MSP AND THE NUMBER OF MSP-SUPPORTED CROPS

In 2014, in his first speech, Modi ji promised "guaranteed welfare for the poor". In the last 10 years, we have lifted 25 crore Indians out of poverty. And 60 crore people have been relieved from the burden of daily needs: rations, housing, water, sanitation, gas. Rs 34 lakh crore was transferred directly to people's bank accounts from 52 ministries. We have built 4 crore homes, and 32 crore people have got health insurance under Ayushman Bharat. Piped drinking water has been provided in nearly 14 crore homes, with 74 per cent coverage and with 100 per cent in 185 districts. Under Ujjawala, 10 crore LPG connections have been given. As many as 12 crore toilets have been built. 'One Nation One Ration Card' benefited 80 crore beneficiaries. Free ration has been distributed to 80 crore poor for two years. We have created nearly 1 crore 41 lakh 'lakhpati didis'. The PM Saubhagya scheme has eliminated darkness from over 6 lakh villages, providing electricity to 3 crore families. The PM Surya Ghar Free Electricity Yojana aims to illuminate 1 crore households free of cost. A 10% reservation was given to economically weaker sections. The concept of Divyang-Sugamya Bharat was introduced. Under the SVANidhi Scheme, street vendors are given ₹10,000 crore credit. A package of Rs 24,000 crore was given to 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups under the PM Jan Man Scheme. We have also distributed Rs 2 lakh crore amongst 12.33 crore beneficiaries under PM Kisan Yojana and 4 crore farmers have benefited under PM Fasal Bima Yojana.

You refer to Rahul Gandhi's guarantees as Chinese guarantees, and contrast it with Modi's "Indian" guarantees. Could you elaborate?
The Congress has never delivered on its promises ever. Had Indira Gandhi fulfilled the Garib Hatao promise, Modi would not have had to work so hard for the poor. For farmers, we have increased the budget six-fold, from Rs 22,000 crore under the UPA to Rs 1.27 lakh crore in 2024-25. The agriculture households' income has doubled from Rs 6,000 per month under the UPA to Rs 10,000 per month under us NDA. The Congress guarantees are such as never to be fulfilled, that's why we call them "Chinese guarantees". We have delivered on our promises without minding whether it creates a controversy or not: Ram temple, removal of Article 370, triple talaq. We call our promises 'sankalp' (resolve) and they call it 'manifesto'.

But they do have eye-catching promises: Rs 1 lakh per year to one woman in every poor family, 30 lakh jobs, apprenticeship, MSP law, minimum wages....
They can say anything. They should have done it in the four states in which they have a government.

90% VOTING IN KASHMIR SIGNAL THE RETURN OF A VIBRANT DEMOCRACY

You repeatedly say the government is increasing the MSP for crops. States like Haryana have indeed widened it beyond traditional crops. But how will you convince the farmers and the public in general in the absence of a legal guarantee?
Farmers have been our top priority. No legal guarantee is needed to empower farmers. Legal guarantees are needed by those who suffer from a bankruptcy of confidence. We are trusted by people and we will do whatever is needed for farmers. We have always done so. Under PM Kisan Sampada Yojana, 38 lakh farmers have benefited and e-NAM has integrated 1,361 mandis. We have established 1,600 agriculture startups. Shree Anna farming is now carried out on 5.7 million hectares.

WE ARE NOT LIKE INDIRA GANDHI TO ABOLISH ELECTIONS

The Congress is also talking about a unified GST. This includes taking it away from farm input products.
GST is the big story of India's reform and it was accomplished after merging 16 taxes. In April 2024 itself, GST saw Rs 2.10 lakh crore collections. Rahul Gandhi can say anything—he says what others ask him to say, he does not think before speaking. Does he want to impose the same quotient of tax on hawai slippers and branded shoes?

Electoral bonds have been declared unconstitutional. How are funds being gathered for election expenses now? Has the cash flow increased? Will you relook political funding if you're back in power?
The Supreme Court is the one that should do a relook. Closing down a policy without giving a new alternative is not good.

How does the 'One Nation One Election' idea propose to change India's scenario?
It only means all elections will be held together, all voting will be simultaneously. They are saying elections will never be held again. How can elections be closed? We are not Indira Gandhi. It was she who imposed Emergency. It was she who increased Parliament's timeline. It was she who jailed 1.35 lakh people without any reason for 19 months. A single person had imposed Emergency: and it was Rahul Gandhi grandmother, who was also the Congress president. One Nation One Election will certainly be implemented if we are voted back. We don't want to spend too much on frequent elections.

Arvind Kejriwal has now got bail. But the arrest of Opposition chief ministers before elections raised questions of timing and propriety. Do you think the arrests could have waited?
Kejriwal was served 19 summonses and he did not come. We moved court and that's why his arrest happened before elections. Had he come on time, he would have been arrested a year before elections. He did not cooperate and the agency had to go to court to seek his arrest.

Is the NIA taking over a case against him? What is this new allegation of 'illegal funding'?
It's not like that. A complaint has been received by the agency and it has simply been forwarded. No in-depth investigation has been started as such.

Is the success the Modi government claims in diplomacy a factor? Does it influence voting?
Under PM Modi's leadership, India's stature has increased on global platforms. Today, India is seen as a bright spot on the global map. Modi ji is today one of the most powerful leaders in the world. Global leaders look up to his opinions. We have extended our helping hand to countries in their time of need, whether it is during the pandemic or war. The Russia-Ukraine war is one of the brilliant examples of our successful global outreach. We also sent vaccines to different countries during the pandemic. Today, we are seen as the voice of the Global South. After Modi's arrival, India has emerged as a soft power. Indian culture has gained global prominence, and there has been a boost in strategic investments. During the pandemic, India assisted the world. Modi ji has turned India into a preferred hub for trade and investment. Today we are setting an example of global unity through the tradition of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. The massive support India enjoys on foreign soil has enhanced the pride of being an Indian.

Certain killings on foreign soil have hit the headlines, including in Canada. Do you thing such things will impact bilateral relations?
It has been sorted out. We have not done it. If they ask anything through diplomatic channels, a reply will be given to them.

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	39	26	Mumbai	34	28
Bhopal	36	24	Panaji	33	26
Jaipur	38	26	Patna	43	28
Amritsar	36	22	Lucknow	42	27
Chennai	35	28	Port Blair	33	27
Kolkata	41	29	Imphal	31	19
Srinagar	21	11	Chandigarh	38	23

KEY PLAYERS

AKHILESH YADAV (SP)
Kannauj

AJAY MISHRA TENI (BJP)
Lakhimpur Kheri

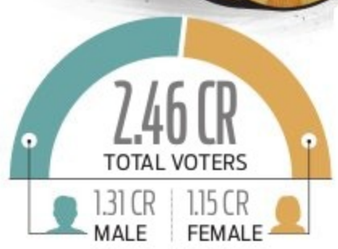
SAKSHI MAHARAJ (BJP)
Unnao

Key Constituency: Kannauj, Lakhimpur Kheri, Etawah, Unnao

Test for SP-Cong alliance

KANNAUJ IN THE HEART OF UP PHASE IV FACE-OFF

Akhilesh Yadav strives to reclaim his family legacy as BJP tries to repeat 2019 show



Polling Centres: **16,334**
Polling Booths: **26,588**

Total seats in Phase 4: 13
Date of polling: May 13

NAMITA BAJPAI @LUCKNOW

THE 13 seats of Uttar Pradesh set to vote in the fourth phase on Monday, May 13, are considered the virtual spinal column of the state as they fall in the central region. These seats are Shahjahanpur (SC), Lakhimpur Kheri, Dhaurahra, Sitapur, Hardoi (SC), Misrikh (SC), Unnao, Farrukhabad, Etawah (SC), Kannauj, Kanpur, Akbarpur and Bahraich (SC). These were more evenly contested than 26 constituencies of the first three phases, but in the previous Lok Sabha elections, the saffron surge took all of them into its fold despite the presence of the SP-BSP-RLD alliance. This time Congress and SP are together again after the 2017 UP Assembly polls.

If the BJP faces the challenge of replicating its 2019 performance in this phase, the SP's top concern is to regain the prestigious Kannauj. The most prominent fight of the fourth phase in UP would be witnessed in Kannauj, the perfume capital of India. Considered a stronghold of the Samajwadis, this time Kannauj is set for a fierce battle between SP chief Akhilesh and BJP's MP and a perfume trader Subrat Pathak. Pathak defeated Akhilesh's wife Dimple by a margin over 12,000 votes in 2019. Meanwhile, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Sitapur, Unnao, Etawah and Bahraich have a big chunk of Dalit voters. The BSP has never been able to open its account in six of the constituencies — Shahjahanpur, Kheri, Hardoi, Farrukhabad, Kannauj and Kanpur. However, the SP has historically struggled to win the Kanpur and Akbarpur seats.

SHAHJAHANPUR (SC)

The BJP won this reserved seat thrice in 1998, 2014 and 2019, the Congress twice in 1999 and 2004 while the Samajwadi Party won this seat only once in 2009. In 2019, the BJP's Arun Kumar Sagar won it by securing 58.09% votes defeating BSP's Amar Chand Jauhar as SP-BSP-RLD candidate who could garners 35.46% votes. While the BJP has repeated its MP, SP has has fielded on Jyotsana Gond, and BSP Dodram Verma.

LAKHIMPUR KHERI

The BJP has won it four times since 1996. It registered two consecutive victories in 2014 and 2019. The SP has won thrice while the Congress last bagged this seat in 2009. While the BJP has fielded minister of state for home in the Modi government, Ajay Mishra Teni, yet again after he registered victory in 2019 and 2014, defeating SP's Purvi Verma in 2019 by securing 53.62% votes. Teni, who had come under huge criticism following his son Ashish Mishra's involvement in trampling four farmers to death under his four-wheeler on October 2, 2021, is seeking a third term from the seat. His son Ashish Mishra is currently out on bail.

Setting all criticism aside, the BJP has chosen to rely on Teni, by making him the candidate for the third time. Challenging him is the SP's Utkarsh Verma and the BSP has fielded Anshay Kalra.

DHAUREHRA

In the last Lok Sabha election, BJP's Rekha Verma secured 48.21% vote share to defeat the BSP's alliance candidate Arshad Siddiqi who was restricted to 33.11% vote share.

While the BJP has repeated its sitting MP Rekha Verma, the SP has fielded Anand Bhadouria. The BSP is betting on Shyam Kishore Awasthi, a Brahmin.

SITAPUR

In 2019, BJP's Rajesh Verma who had defeated BSP's Nakul Dubey by securing 48.3% vote share is seeking another term from the seat. Nakul Dubey polled 38.84% votes while the Congress secured 9% of the total votes. This time the seat is in Congress kitty and its candidate Rakesh Rathore is facing BJP's Rajesh Verma.

HARDOI (SC)

In 2019, the BJP's Jai Prakash Rawat received 53.71% vote share, defeating SP's Shiv Prasad Verma, who, as the SP-BSP-RLD's candidate, got 41.8% of the total votes in constituency.

MISRIKH (SC)

The little-known constituency is a mixture of five assembly constituencies — borrowing three from Hardoi, and one each of Sitapur and Kanpur. In 2019, the BJP's Ashok Rawat defeated BSP's Neelu Satyarthi who as an alliance candidate got 42.22% of the votes. While the BJP has repeated Ashok Rawat, SP has fielded Sangeeta Rajvanshi and BSP BR Ahirwar. Ashok Rawat won the same seat in 2004 and 2009 as a BSP candidate.

UNNAO

Known as the 'Land of pen and sword', the Unnao parliamentary constituency is dominated by Dalits who make over 30% of the total population as per 2011 census. After clinching a landslide in 2019 over SP's Arun Shankar Shukla, BJP has repeated its MP Sakshi Maharaj in Unnao. Congress candidate Anu Tandon finished third with 15% of the votes. In 2014, the same BJP candidate defeated the same SP nominee as in 2019. This time, SP and the BSP have named Anu Tandon and Ashok Kumar Pandey, respectively

FARRUKHABAD

Known as bastion of senior Congress leader and former Union minister Salman Khurshid, the BJP has won this seat four times, in 1996 and 1998. The SP won twice in 1999 and 2004 and the Congress last won in 2009. In 2019, the BJP's Mukesh Rajput with 56.8% vote share defeated BSP's Manoj Agrawal who secured 34.71% of the votes. While the BJP has retained its MP, the SP has fielded Naval Kishore Kashyap, both being the OBC candidates. The BSP has made the contest interesting by playing the Brahmin card, fielding Kranti Pandey.

ETAWAH (SC)

A known SP bastion, the Etawah constituency is a reserved seat with sizeable Dalit voters. SP won in 1999, 2004 and 2009. This once elected BSP founder Kanshi Ram, too, to the Lok Sabha in 1991. The BJP won in 2014. The BJP's Ram Shankar Katheria defeated the SP's Kamlesh Kumar in 2019 with the Congress getting only 16,570 votes (1.61%). The BJP has repeated its MP while the SP and the BSP have fielded Jitendra Dohare and Ram Singh Baghel, respectively.

KANNAUJ

The BJP stormed the SP citadel in 2019 when Subrat Pathak defeated the then sitting MP Dimple Yadav, albeit by a narrow margin of just over 12,000 votes. While the BJP has repeated the MP who is facing a stiff challenge from none other than SP chief Akhilesh Yadav himself who is out to reclaim the family legacy of his father Mulayam Singh Yadav. The BSP has fielded Imran Bin Zafar.

KANPUR

In 2019, BJP's Satyadev Pachauri with 55.6% vote share won it by defeating Congress' Sri Prakash Jaiswal who got 37.11% votes. This time BJP and Congress have fielded Brahmin candidates -- Ramesh Awasthi and Alok Mishra. The BSP has given ticket to Kuldeep Bhadauriya.

AKBARPUR

Once a BSP bastion, this constituency sent former UP CM and BSP chief Mayawati to Lok Sabha thrice in a row in 1998, 1999 and 2004. Earlier, in 1996 too, the seat went to the BSP.

In 2019, BJP's Devendra Bhole with 56.62% votes defeating BSP's Nisha Sachan who secured 29.82% votes. In 2014 also, Bhole had won. In 2024, while the BJP has repeated Bhole yet again, SP has fielded Raja Ram Pal. The BSP has named a Brahmin candidate Rajesh Kumar Dwivedi.

BAHRAICH (SC)

The reserved seat is enriched with natural opulence including dense forests and rich rivers but the socio-economic and basic amenities parameters of Bahraich are below the national average. The BJP won the seat five times in 1991, 1996, 1999, 2014 and 2019. The SP and the BSP won here once each in 2004 and 1998. The Congress also registered its victory here last in 2009. In 2019, the BJP's

Akshaibar Lal won the seat by defeating the SP's Shabbir Valmiki with 53.12% votes. This time the BJP has replaced its MP with Anand Gond while the SP has nominated Ramesh Gautam and BSP Birjesh.

JHARKHAND

Modi takes a swipe at JMM, Cong over 'mountain of notes'

MUKESH RANJAN @Ranchi

PRIME minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that INDIA bloc partners JMM and Congress have grown a mountain of notes in Jharkhand, referring to a cash haul of ₹35 crore from the domestic help of the personal secretary of state minister Alamgir Alam.

"If crores of cash is being recovered from their servants, then just imagine how much money their masters are having in their lockers? JMM and Congress have grown a mountain of notes," Modi said at a rally in Chatra. "Whose money is this? Don't you want that those who have looted the country and your money should go to the jail? Who can take action against them....Only Modi can do this as I have no black spots on my clothes," he added. "JMM and Congress don't do anything except corruption and when I try to do something, they try to create hurdles on my way."

Targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, PM said the "crown prince" will get seats even less than his age.

Taking a dig at the opposition, Modi said the small regional parties attached with INDI Alliance should merge themselves with the Congress.

"After the completion of polling of three phases, they (opposition) have now admitted that the Congress and its alliance partners will not be getting even that many seats, that is 50%, which is required for getting recognised as an opposition party in parliament. And if they merge their parties with the Congress, they might get recognised as opposition," said Modi.

Modi claimed that the BJP is not only winning 400 plus seats, but NDA will form governments even in the states where assembly polls are being held simultaneously.

"2024 polls are not just an election to form a government, but an exercise to build the country. This is an election to save the country from thieves and robbers," Modi said. The PM warned that Congress and alliance want to distribute country's wealth among Muslims.

'INDI Alliance should merge with the Cong'

Taking a dig at the opposition, Modi said the small regional parties attached with INDI Alliance should merge themselves with the Congress. They will not get that many seats, that is 50%, which is required for getting recognised as an opposition party in parliament. At least after merging, they might get recognised as opposition

MAHARASHTRA

Priyanka hits back at BJP for 'snatching rights of tribals'

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

CONGRESS general secretary Priyanka Gandhi addressing the Lok Sabha election campaign rally on Saturday in Nandurbar said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi rather than crying in election, should learn lessons from the life of her grandmother and former PM Indira Gandhi, who divided Pakistan in two.

Priyanka Gandhi was in Nandurbar for Congress candidate Gowaal Padvi. This was her second rally in Maharashtra after the one in Latur. Congress party earlier used to start its campaign rally from tribal Nandurbar Lok sabha seat, but in the last two elections, the party had ignored this seat, however in this elections, Gandhi family members addressed the rally in the last day of campaign in tribal district in Maharashtra. Nadurbar was the Congress stronghold and bastions till 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

Criticising PM Narendra Modi, Priyanka Gandhi said that PM Modi has power and all the resources. She said his own people call him Vishwaguru. "But while campaigning in elections, Modi starts crying like a baby. He says he is getting abused. He starts counting these abuses. Modiji, this is public life. Learn something from Indiraji who broke Pakistan into two parts. Learn bravery, determination and courage from her. But you cannot because you call that great martyr an anti-national," Gandhi said.

Gandhi also reminded the gathered crowd the Gandhi family's close relationship with Nandurbar district. Nandurbar is the scheduled tribe constituency that will go to polls on May 13.

She questioned what kind of a leader was desrired. "The one who walks for 4,000 km to understand your problems or someone who does not like a single stain on his clothes? Someone who fakes tears or the one who will wipe them? The one who will solve your problems or count his own? Do you want a fearless leader who speaks the truth despite being disqualified from Parliament or a leader who goes on lying?" Gandhi asked.

'BJP, RSS repeatedly attacking tribal pride'

Attacking the BJP-led central government over the arrest of then lone tribal CM Hemant Soren, Gandhi said that the BJP and RSS are repeatedly attacking the tribal community and its pride. She also mentioned that President Droupadi Murmu, who is a tribal, was neither invited to inaugurate the new Parliament nor the Ram temple at Ayodhya.

TRIBAL SEAT

HER STORY: It's woman vs woman in Singhbhum poll contest

MUKESH RANJAN @Ranchi

FOR the first time, two women candidates are contesting against each other in Jharkhand's Singhbhum Lok Sabha seat. While Member of Parliament Geeta Koda is fighting as an NDA candidate, JMM's MLA from Manoharpur, Joba Manjhi has been fielded by the INDI alliance from the seat. Even as people on the roadside favour BJP, the JMM is stronger in the remote villages.

Geeta Koda is banking on the development works done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On the other hand, Joba Manjhi is mobilising people raising the issue of former Chief Minister Hemant Soren's arrest as an insult to the tribal community.

However, Koda is said to have an edge over Manjhi as the constituency is primarily dominated by the Ho community with almost 59 per cent out of a total of 61 per cent tribal population. As Joba Manjhi hails from Santhal community, he is trying to mobilise people on tribal sentiments.

Tribals here are said to be divided for the first time after JMM fielded a Santhal from the seat. Notably, Geeta Koda is the wife of former chief minister Madhu Koda, who was an independent MLA and became Chief Minister of the state in the year 2006.

Joba Manjhi

Geeta Koda

The Koda family is said to have a huge influence in the tribal dominated Kolhan region from where they have been winning elections continuously since 2000. During the 2019 Lok Sabha polls also, Geeta Koda contested on Congress ticket and defeated BJP's Laxman Gilua with a margin of over 72,000 votes and secured a vote share of 49.11 per cent.

But this time, she is contesting on a BJP ticket and is confident of repeating her victory.

Locals also asserted that the tribal voters themselves are divided in Singhbhum. "The Ho and Santhal community were divided on the issue of candidates but, this time it appears that they will be voting separately for their respective candidates," said a local Devendra Kumar.

Despite repeated requests to change its candidate as a Santhal has least chances of winning from the seat, the JMM leadership never paid heed to it, he added.

Asked about the issues they are going to the polls with, Kumar said that issues are the same development and tribal issues, but caste factor has an upper hand and most of the people will be voting on the basis of their caste only.

Of the 14 candidates, five including Geeta Koda belonging to Ho-community, is contesting from the seat which will also prove to be a deciding factor.

On the tribal sentiments against the arrest of Hemant Soren, they said, "Lok Sabha elections are contested on different patterns. BJP was leading even in the Assembly constituency of Chief Minister Champai Soren during the last two Lok Sabha polls. Moreover, the BJP has also been working hard for this seat and both Modi and Amit Shah have been visiting the place quite frequently," said General Secretary of Adivasi Ho Mahasabha, Gabbar Singh Hembrom.

ELECTION2024

Ban on gatherings near poll stations

Mumbai Police has issued guidelines restricting assembly of people within 100 metres from polling stations for all six Lok Sabha constituencies which will vote in the fifth phase on May 20. As per the guidelines, the entry of those persons not related to elections will not be allowed in the vicinity of polling stations from 6 am till May 20 midnight. Only candidates or the accredited agents, officials on poll duty, a public servant shall be allowed.

Meet the press on poll day, EC told

Media associations demanded that the Election Commission hold press conferences after every voting phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. Media associations Press Club of India, Indian Women Press Corps, Press Association, Foreign Correspondents Club and Delhi Union of Journalists asked poll panel to release the entire poll data soon after polling day.

'Centre has stopped paying Bengal dues'

Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee said the BJP government at the Centre had allegedly deprived West Bengal "willfully" for the last ten years and it is time a righteous government be installed at the Centre now. Speaking at a public rally at Uluberia in Howrah, Banerjee said, "The Centre has stopped paying dues which state owes under schemes like 100 days work."

90 injured in Argentina's capital when a passenger train struck an empty boxcar and derailed on Friday

GLOBAL WEATHER

LR: Light Rain • WI: Windy • HR: Heavy Rain • SN: Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	27	13	SNY	Los Angeles	23	14	SNY
Colombo	32	25	SNY	Melbourne	18	11	LC
Dhaka	32	24	LR	Moscow	10	1	SNY
Dubai	33	26	SNY	New York	17	10	SNY
Houston	29	22	SNY	Singapore	31	28	HR
Istanbul	17	10	SNY	Toronto	12	9	LC
London	24	13	SNY	Washington	19	11	TDS

Israel orders civilian evacuation from more areas of east Rafah

Washington says Israel's use of US supplied arms may have violated international law

RAFAH

THE Israel Defence Forces on Saturday ordered Palestinians to leave more areas of eastern Rafah and the northern Gaza Strip as it pressed ahead with its fight against Hamas militants.

The latest evacuation order, which some residents told AFP they had received via text and audio messages to their phones, comes days after Israeli tanks and troops entered Rafah, the Palestinian territory's southernmost city, and seized a key crossing on the Egyptian border. Gaza residents were told to leave parts of Rafah's Shabura refugee camp, the Jenina and Khirbet al-Adas neighbourhoods and other areas, and to move to a designated humanitarian area in Al-Mawasi on the coast.

Israeli military spokesman Avichay Adraee posted the order in Arabic on X, saying these areas had "witnessed Hamas terrorist activities in recent days and weeks".

Images on social media showed leaflets with the latest order, which the army said in a statement it had distributed in the affected areas. Suhaib al-Hams, director of a healthcare facility in Rafah, said in a video message to journalists that "sadly, the Kuwait Speciality Hospital is now included in the places threatened with evacuation".

"There is no other place for patients and injured people to go but this hospital," Hams said, urging "immediate international protection" for the medical facility. The Israeli army on Monday issued its first evacuation order for parts of eastern Rafah, saying it was in preparation for a widely anticipated ground assault.

Adraee said evacuation orders were also issued to Palestinians in northern Gaza's Jabalia and Beit Lahia.

"You are in a dangerous combat zone," Adraee said. "Hamas is trying to rebuild its capabilities in the area, and therefore the IDF will work with great force against terrorist organisations."

Meanwhile, the Biden administration said on Friday that Israel's use of US-provided weapons in Gaza likely violated international humanitarian law but that wartime conditions prevented US officials from determining that for certain in specific airstrikes. The finding of 'reasonable' evidence to conclude that the US ally had breached international law protecting civilians in the way it conducted its war against Hamas was the strongest statement that the Biden administration has yet made on the matter.

But the caveat that the administration wasn't able to link specific US weapons to individual attacks by Israeli forces in Gaza could give the administration leeway in future. The first-of-its-kind assessment, which was compelled by President Joe Biden's fellow Democrats in Congress, comes after months of airstrikes, ground fighting and aid restrictions that have claimed 35,000 lives. *AFP*

A Palestinian man carries the body of his relative killed in Israeli bombardments of the Gaza Strip at Al Aqsa Hospital in Deir al Balah on Saturday | AP

WAR WATCH

ISRAEL-GAZA: DAY: 218

Rockets launched from Rafah, says Israel

The Israeli army said rockets were launched Saturday from Rafah in southern Gaza towards the Kerem Shalom crossing, which was temporarily shut earlier this week. "Four launches were identified that crossed from the Rafah area," the military said, adding one rocket was intercepted by air defences "and the rest fell in open areas" around Kerem Shalom

People gather to watch the northern lights in the sky over Latourell in Oregon on Friday night | AP

auroras light up night sky as Strong solar storms hit earth

PARIS

A powerful solar storm put on an amazing skyward light show across the globe overnight but has caused what appeared to be only minor disruptions to the electric power grid, communications and satellite positioning systems.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said extreme geomagnetic storm conditions continued on Saturday, and there were preliminary reports of power grid irregularities, degradation of high-frequency communications and global positioning systems.

But the Federal Emergency Management Agency said that as of early Saturday morning, no FEMA region had reported any significant impact from the storms.

NOAA predicted that strong flares will continue through at least Sunday, and a spokeswoman said in an email that the agency's Space Weather Prediction Centre had prepared well for the storm.

On Saturday morning, SpaceX's Starlink satellite internet service said on its website that service had been degraded and its team was investigating. CEO Elon Musk wrote on X overnight that its satellites were "under a lot of pressure, but holding up so far". Brilliant purple, green, yellow and pink hues of the Northern Lights were reported worldwide, with sightings in Germany, Switzerland, London, Prague, Barcelona and elsewhere.

In the US, Friday's night's solar storm pushed the lights much further south than normal. People in Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and other Midwestern states were able to capture photos of colours along the horizon.

NOAA said the solar storm will persist throughout the weekend, offering another chance for many to catch the Northern Lights on Saturday night. The agency issued a rare severe geomagnetic storm warning when a solar outburst reached Earth on Friday afternoon, hours sooner than anticipated. NOAA alerted operators of power plants and spacecraft in orbit, as well as FEMA, to take precautions.

"For most people here on planet Earth, they won't have to do anything," said Rob Steenburgh, a scientist with NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Centre. "That's really the gift from space weather: the aurora," Steenburgh said. He and his colleagues said the best aurora views may come from phone cameras, which are better at capturing light than the naked eye. *AP*

ASIA MATTERS

Want to have a pet cat? Buy a govt license

A new framework allowing those living in Housing Board flats to keep up to two cats will kick in on Sept 1, marking the start of a two-year transition period. Existing owners must adapt to the new requirements, including mandatory licensing and microchipping, *Channel News Asia* reported. The limit for private residences is up to three cats or dogs, or a combination of both. Licensing will be available via AVS' Pet Animal Licensing System from Sept. It will be an offence to keep unlicensed pet cats from 2026 onwards. For a licence, cat owners must ensure felines are microchipped.

Facebook page selling babies inaccessible

A well-known Thai Facebook page has reported that a group of people were selling their babies via a Facebook group, which is now inaccessible. Pakpoom Dechhasdin, also known as More Lab Panda, posted a picture showing numerous posts captured by Thai netizens in the group showed that some were seeking to pay for Thai female babies from the northern part of Thailand, *The Straits Times* reported. A prospective buyer said he was earning S$683 a month, an income that many adoption agencies would say is inadequate for adoption.

LOSS OF DOCUMENTS

I, **SUBRAMANI ANNAPPAIAH** a resident of Hebbanagodu Village, Bhavani Road, Athibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore District.

Request you that my native place is Manjalagiri Village, having 30 cent Land in Kundumarana Palli Village in survey No. 336. on 05.03.2024, while going to village in bus, I noticed that the original papers relating to the above said land have been lost. I searched everywhere but not found.

The sale deed date is 08.07.1979 vide doc No 319/77-78. So I request you to find the above documents. If found please handover the documents to Hebbagodi Police Station.

- Subramani Annappaiah

PUBLIC NOTICE

I hereby notifying general public and financial institutions that my clients **Smt. Vijayalakshmi D.S.,** have negotiated to purchase the Schedule Property from M/s. M. G. BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS, A Registered Partnership Firm, Registered under the Indian Partnership Act-1932, Bearing Firm No. GDN-F506/2021-22. Having its office at: No. 129, 2nd Main Road, Rashi Orchards, Near Goldfinch Retreat, Kempegowda International Airport Road, Bengaluru-562157, Represented by its Partners. **1. Sri. M. S. VENKATASUBBA REDDY, 2. Mr. SAMPATH KUMAR. B. H, 3. Mr. CHANDRA SHEKHARA M. C, 4. Mr. SUNDARESHA, 5. Mr. SRINIVASA REDDY N.** their members, financial institutions and the general public are hereby notified that if anybody has any objections, claims, charges, lien etc., if any in respect of the schedule property may lodge their objections with documentary proof relied upon with the undersigned **within FIVE (5) days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, my client proceeds to complete the sale transaction.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Residential Site bearing Site No.90/1, formed in Residential Converted Land Measuring 5 Acres 24 Guntas, bearing Survey Number 25/2 of Muthuru Village, Kasaba Hobli, Doddaballapur Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.

All that Piece and Parcel of the Residential Vacant Site bearing Serial No. (Record No.) 23244394

E-Asthi PID No. 7-3-605-312B/87

Old Property No. 178/25/2/VS-90/1

Assessment No. 178/25/2/VS-90/1

Measuring: **East to West** 12.19 meters (40 feet)

North to South 9.14 meters (30 feet)

Totally Measuring 111.42 Square Meters (1200 Square Feet), Situated at Muthuru, 7th Ward Dargapura, Doddaballapur, Bengaluru Rural District, Bounded on;

East by : Layout Road

West by: Property No. 7-3-604-312B/74 (Site No.75/2)

North by: Property No. 7-3-603-312B/61 (Site No. 89)

South by: Property No. 7-3-603-312B/64 (Site No. 90/2)

Bengaluru Dated: 10-05-2024

Chetan Kumar N.V., Advocate,
No.12/5-1, C.K.Street, P.G.Hali, Vyalikaval, Bengaluru - 560 002.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that my client Smt. LALITHA RAVISHANKAR, residing at No.1130, 5th Main, 1st 'A' Block, 2nd Stage, Rajajinagar, Bengaluru – 560010, intends to purchase the below mentioned schedule property from its owner Smt.S.Seetha Lakshmi. If any persons having any objections to purchase the Schedule Property may lodge their objections and claims before the undersigned or my client, along with supporting documents within 15 days from the date of this publication, and the objection and claims received thereafter will not be binding on my client and not entertained and will proceed to purchase the Schedule property as there are no objections claims and is free from all encumbrance. Later no claims will be entertained.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Property bearing New Municipal No.2/3-1, (Old No.24/2), PID No.9-64-2/3-1, situated at 1st Main Road, 'E' Block, Subramanyanagar, Bengaluru – 560010, measuring East to West 34.6 feet and North to South 20 feet, in all measuring 690 Square feet or 76.667 Square Yard, together with the Three storied building built thereon and together with all rights, appurtenances whatsoever and the said property bounded on the : **East by** : Road, **West by** : Dr. Rajkumar Road (80 feet Road), **North by** : Site No.24/2/3, South by : Site No.24/2/1/2.

KEERTHI PRASAD .D. C, Advocate
DC & DC ASSOCIATES,
No.62, 2nd Main, Link Road, behind Govt. Girls High School, Sheshadripuram, Bengaluru- 560020.
Ph No.9448228330

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is Inform the General Public that the following shares certificate of **PAUSHAK LTD** having its Registered office at Alembic Road, Vadodara, Gujarat, 390003. Registered in the name of the following share holder have been lost by them.

Name of the Share holders	Folio No.	Cert. No.	Dist. No.	No. of shares
PAUSHAK LTD K. NAGAMANI SREENIVASAN	K05615	1342	786271 - 787470	1200

The Public are hereby cautioned against purchasing or dealing in any way with the above referred share certificate.

Any person who has any claim in respect of the said share certificate/s should lodge such claim with the Company or its Registrar and transfer agents at Link In time India Pvt. Ltd, Geetakunj, 1, Bhakti Nagar Society, Behind ABS Tower, Old Padra Road, Vadodara, Gujarat-390015, **within 15 days** of publication of this notice after which no claim will be entertained and the Company shall proceed to issue Duplicate share Certificate/s.

Sd/- **K. NAGAMANI SREENIVASAN**
Date: 11.05.2024. Place: Bangalore

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

(CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION)

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. E148-CN-TPJ-TF-042 DT: 09-05-2024

For and on behalf of President of India, the Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer, General, Construction, Southern Railway, Egmore, Chennai 600008 invites e-tender for the work Karaikkal - Peralam Section - New Line Work - Design, manufacture, supply, erection, testing and commissioning of one number of 10 persons capacity passenger lift (G+ 2 floors) at Thirunallaru Railway Station. Works Contract, with the above tender notice. Railway cash value is Rs.1650000/-. Date & time of closing of tender is 31.05.2024 at 11:00 Hrs. All the other details of this tender are available in **www.ireps.gov.in** website.

Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer Construction, Chennai Egmore.
(For and on behalf of President of India)

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PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed that my client Mrs.SNEHA NAGPAL has lost the original copies of Agreement dated 25/3/1954 registered as document No4813/1953-54 of Book-I in the office of sub registrar Bangalore city and original copy of sale deed executed by then city improvement Trust Board in favor of G.Ramegowda in respect of site No.94 formed by then CITB at Vayalikaval extension, Bangalore, measuring 45' X 90'. In this regard e-lost complaint has also lodged on 10/05/2024.

Persons having any claims and right on the said property may lodge their claims with documentary evidence within 7 days from this day to the undersigned.

Mr.S.Umesh, Advocate,
No.21/8, Vasanthapura Main Road, Konanakute Cross, Bangalore-62.
Ph.9739361413

PUBLIC NOTICE

We, the undersigned proposes to purchase the property more particularly described in the schedule hereunder from its present owner **DR.B.N.LAKSHMIKANTH,** aged about 78 years, son of late Dr.K.N.Narayan, residing at No.80/A, Byrasandra Main Road, Opp:Good Luck Pharmacy, Byrasandra, Jayanagar 1st Block, Bangalore 560 011. It is represented by the present owner that he has clear and marketable title to the Schedule Property. Any person/persons who claims any right, title or interest of any nature or any lien, charge or enforceable right in relation to the Schedule Property and/or has any objections of any nature to the transaction should lodge such claim and/or objections in writing to the undersigned together with supporting documents **within seven (7) days** hereof, failing which it will presumed that no valid claims or objections subsist and we will proceed to complete the transaction with the present owner thereof subject to compliance with other statutory and legal formalities.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Site bearing No.132/18, Municipal No.18, PID NO.59-9-18, situated at 22nd Cross, 3rd Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore 560 011, measuring East to West 60 feet, North to South 63+122/2 feet, in all measuring 5500 sq.ft together with a building constructed thereon measuring about Ground Floor 2190 sq.ft and 4 Upper floor together measuring 7077 Sqft of built up area and bounded on the: **East by** : Site No.131
West by : Road
North by : Site No.465/2
South by : Site Nos.462 and 463

MR.PRATHEEP V GOWDA
Director and CEO
ISIRI BUILDERS & DEVELOPERS PVT.LTD
No.50, Isiri Residency, 1st Cross, B Sector, MIG 1st Phase, Yelahanka New Town, Bangalore 560 064. MOBILE: 99000 09994
EMAIL: pratheep.gowda6@gmail.com

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brides

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Hindu Nadar, 40/6'1", M.Tech (IIT Madras), Sr. Principal Engineer (Chip Design) in an MNC in Bangalore, eggetarian, teetotaller, seeks never married, suitable bride (upto 36 yrs).

Caste No Bar.

Ph: 9840117920

grooms

GROOMS

Seeks Alliance from UK settled professionally qualified boys for an Ezhava girl 29 yr old 5' 7"ht Doctor working in NHS, London.

Contact - **08898024034**

GROOMS

Ezhava girl 26, Anizham (Shudha) 165 CM PGDM (MBA) - HR currently working in Bangalore, alliance invited from parents of professionals .

9924899114 / 9428451937

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify the General Public that **i)** Mrs. Rhoda Fernandez **ii)** Mrs. Rochelle Fernandez, **iii)** Mrs. Rowena Scurville and **iv)** Mrs. Randa Fernandez, all being the legal heirs of Late Arnold Fernandez and residing at No. 8/1, Stephens Road, Frazer Town, Bangalore-05 have succeeded to the Schedule property pursuant to the death of Late Arnold Fernandez, who was the sole and absolute owner in possession of the Schedule property having acquired the same through the Sale Deed dated 16.04.1979 registered as Document No. 155/79-80 of Book I in Volume No. 2008 at Pages 12-16 in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Shivajinagar, Bangalore. However, the Orginal of the said Sale Deed pertaining to he Schedule propery herein, has been lost and despite the best ffrts, the same could not be raced. A Police Complaint is also lodged with the Kamataka State Police, who has issued Lost Report bearing No. 1032696 / 2024 dated 29.04.2024

In view of the above, any person/s having found or finding the aforesaid lost document may kindly return the same to the undersigned.

Further, it is notified that the above said persons on the basis of the other original documents and the certified copy of the aforesaid lost document which has been obtained from the jurisdictional Sub-Registrar Office, are negotiating / initializing the terms for sale of the Schedule property by representing that they are the only legal heirs of Late Arnold Fernandez and that they are the absolute joint owners in possession of the same and that they have not created any charge or encumbrances on the Schedule property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Immoveable property bearing Municipal No. 8/1 (earlier forming part of Property No. 15, later No. 8), having PID No. 91-7-8/1 situated at Stephens Road (Standage Road), Frazer Town, New Ward No. 97 of BBMP, Bangalore 05, measuring on the East 20 feet, on the West 20 feet, on the North 35 feet and on the South 35 feet and the said property is bounded on:-

East by : Private property (earlier being Property No. 16)
West by : Stephens Road
North by : Private Property (earlier being remaining portion of Property No.8)
South by : Private Property

IMRAN PASHA, Advocate
No. 105, 1st Floor, MONEY POINT K. H. Double Road,
Bangalore - 27. Ph : 98450 38298.

PUBLIC NOTICE

TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

My clients are negotiating to purchase the immovable property bearing municipal No.66 (Old No.6/1) situated at Shankarmutt Road, Shankarapuram, [Ward No.49, K.G.Nagar] Bengaluru, (BBMP PID No.49-54-66), measuring East to West 150'ft and North to South 50'ft, totally measuring 7500 Sq ft., which is more fully described in the SCHEDULE hereunder and hereinafter referred as "SCHEDULE PROPERTY" from its sole and absolute owner Dr. Srini Malini, D/o.Late.T.S.Sundaramma & Late. Sri. P.N. Srinivasan, residing at No.11802, Gladewood Lane, Houston, TX 77071, USA, for a valuable sale consideration amount.

The aforesaid Dr. Srini Malini has represented to my clients that she is the absolute owner of the schedule property having acquired the same by virtue of a registered gift deed dated:23.12.2009 executed by her mother and previous owner Smt. T.S. Sundaramma, having a clear, marketable and absolute right, title, interest and possession over the Schedule Property. She has further represented that the schedule property is free from all or any kind of charges, claims, encumbrances, Court Attachments, injunctions, Minor claims, or any sort of claims of whatsoever nature and there are no subsisting sale agreements or contracts binding the said Dr. Srini Malini or the schedule property and there is no hindrance, impediment or obstacle for the proposed sale transaction in respect of the schedule property in favor of my clients.

Any person/persons claiming to have any sort of right, title, claim, interest, lien, agreement or charge over the schedule property or any part thereof or any other claims or objections for the proposed sale transaction, may lodge their objections/ claims along with supporting documents with the undersigned **within 7 days** from the date of publication of this public notice.

If no such objections/claims are received within the prescribed time, my clients will proceed to complete the sale transaction and if any objections or claims is lodged beyond the prescribed period to time, it shall not be reckoned and it shall be deemed that all objections and claims by whosoever are waived.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing municipal No.66 (Old No.6/1) situated at Shankarmutt Road, Shankarapuram, [Ward No.49, K.G.Nagar] Bengaluru, (BBMP PID No.49-54-66), measuring East to West 150ft and North to South 50ft, totally measuring 7500 Sq ft., and bounded on the: **East by:** Shankarmutt Road, **West by:** Conservancy lane, **North by:** Private Property, **South by:** Private Property.

H.S. SOMNATH, Advocate
No. GF-4, Ground Floor, "Sampurna Chambers", No. 13, Vasavi Temple Road, V.V.Puram, Bengaluru-560 004.
Mob: +91 98452 76908.
Date: 11-05-2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public are hereby informed that my client **Sri. PRASAD K.J.,** S/o. K.Jayaram, Aged about 38 years, R/at No.101, Meenakshi Estates, North Avenue, Sampigehalli Main Road, Agrahara Village, Yelahanka Hobli & Taluk, Bengaluru -560 064. Aadhar No.3434 1548 6377, PAN No.ARYPJ6079K, informs that, my client is intending to purchase the Site bearing No.16, out of Property No.14/1, Marenahalli Village Panchayath Khatha No.792/652/16, situated at Marenahalli Village, Jala Hobli, Bengaluru North Taluk, now Yelahanka Taluk, Bengaluru District, measuring East to West : 50 Feet and North to South : 30 Feet, totally measuring 1500 Square Feet and bounded on: East by : Site No. 9, West by : Road, North by : Private Property, South by : Site No.15, for valuable sale consideration from one Sri. SANDEEP SHARMA @ SANDEEP KUMAR, S/o. Late Saduram Sharma, Aged about 52 Years, R/at No.18, 3rd Cross, Kempaiah Block, Mubaraknagar, Near Mubarak Masjid, J.C. Nagar, Bengaluru -560 046. Aadhar No.2094 6630 7627, having acquired the same through Registered Sale Deed from its previous owner Sri. Nanjappa S/o. Late Bachappa vide Sale Deed Dated : 30-12-2013, bearing Document No.YAN-1-09419/2013-14 of Book-I, Stored in C.D. No.YAND 525, registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Gandhinagar (Yelahanka), Bengaluru, for valuable sale consideration. After purchase of the above property he got transferred the kahtha and other related records from his favour from concerned Marenahalli Village pachayath and also paying the taxes to the concerned authority regularly and he has sold the Schedule Property in favour of my client and my client intending to purchase the same.

The general public are hereby informed that any person/s having any manner of claim, interest or objection for the purchase of the above property by my clients referred above, they may submit their objections if any along with supporting documents to the undersigned within 7 days from the date of this public notice, failing which it will be presumed that there are no objections and my client will be proceeding further to complete the sale transactions with Sri. SANDEEP SHARMA @ SANDEEP KUMAR, Please note that any claims / objections / right over the above said property received after 7 days from the date of this publication, will not be taken into consideration for any reason/s.

MUNIRAJU, Advocate,
No.4, Nikshaa Nilaya, 5th Cross, Sri. Balaji Krupa Layout, Dr. Shivaramakaranthanagara post, R.K. Hegdenagara, Bengaluru-560 077.
Mob No.9448212412/9343418623
Prasad K.J. Mob No.9611892315

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby notified that my client has negotiated to purchase the property, described in the Schedule hereunder, from its present owners Mr. Preetham J. Shetty and Ms. Priya J. Shetty. It is also informed by the present owners that the original Sale Deed dated 28/06/2008 as Doc No. VRT-1-01716-2008-09 is irretrievably lost and police complaint is lodged and public notice is also issued.

If any person or persons or financial institution or Bank has any claim or objections over the schedule property or any person or persons claim any right, title or interest, over the schedule property, the same may be lodged with the undersigned within **TEN days** from today, along with relevant claim documents, failing which, it will be presumed that the Schedule Property is free from any such claim and my client would proceed to purchase the Schedule Property and any claim received thereafter will not bind my client and would not be considered by my client. The public are hereby cautioned not to deal or transact with the said property since the same is offered to be sold to my client.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the house property bearing Site No. 23, in the Layout called'RELIAABLE LAKEDEW RESIDENCY – PHASE – IV' formed in converted Sy. No. 119 and Layout approved by BDA, situated at Haralur Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, measuring East : 25' 6", West : 30', North : 40', South : 40' 2", totally 1114 Sq.ft., along with a building in ground floor, first floor, second floor with built up area of about 430.56 square feet, 650 square feet, 650 square feet respectively, having Electricity, Sanitary and Water supply facilities, coming under BBMP and bounded on the: **East by:** Private Property, **West by:** Road, **North by :** Site No. 24, **South by :** Private Property

J.N. ALASINGAR, Advocate
193, 5 th Main Road, 3 rd Phase, J.P. Nagar, Bangalore- 560 078.
Mobile: 9900095158, Date: 11-05-2024

STATE BANK OF INDIA

Premises & Estate Dept., Local Head Office, 2nd Floor, III/1, Pt. J. N. Marg, Bhubaneswar-751001,
Ph. No.: 0674-2394637, E-mail: agmpre.lhobhu@sbi.co.in

PRE-QUALIFICATION OF COMPOSITE CONTRACTORS / VENDORS FOR INTERNAL REFURBISHING (2ND TO 5TH FLOOR) AND ALLIED CIVIL WORKS INCLUDING EXTERNAL FACADE WORKS, FIXED FIRE FIGHTING SYSTEM, AUTOMATIC FIRE DETECTION & ALARM SYSTEM, PUBLIC ADDRESS AND VOICE EVACUATION SYSTEM (BASEMENT TO 6TH FLOOR), INTERNAL ELECTRICAL & EXTERNAL WORKS (LT), DATA CABLING WORKS, HVAC WORKS AT EXISTING LHO BUILDING AT BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA.

Premises & Estate Department, on behalf of SBI invites applications from bonafide & experienced Contractors for preparing panel of Composite Contractors/Vendors/Firms through "Pre-qualification process for captioned work at Local Head Office building at Bhubaneswar, Odisha". The eligible and interested parties may download the prescribed Application Form from the **Bank's website "Bank.sbi->SBI in the news-> Procurement news",** from **12.05.2024** to **01.06.2024 up to 15.00 Hrs.** Completely filled in application in the prescribed format along with all supporting documents should reach us in the aforesaid address on or before due date & time. The Bank reserves the right to reject/accept any or all the offers received without assigning any reason thereof. The addendum /corrigendum, if any will be published in the Bank's Website only.

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 12.05.2024 — Asst. General Manager (P&E)

बनारस रेल इंजन कारखाना, वाराणसी-221004

बिड संख्या:E-09/2024-25 — **ई-निविदा सूचना** — दिनांक: 07.05.2024

भारत के राष्ट्रपति के लिए एवं उनकी ओर से निम्नलिखित वस्तुओं का आपूर्ति हेतु ई–निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं । केवल ई–प्रस्ताव ही स्वीकार्य है, जिसके लिए वेंडर का क्लास III का डिजिटल सिग्नेचर एवं IREPS) पर पंजीकरण आवश्यक है निविदाओं का विवरण निम्न क्रम से है:– क्र.सं.–निविदा संख्या, (खुलने की तिथि), विवरण और मात्रा । क्र.सं.: 1, 01241254, (28.05.2024), **स्टील पाइप फिटिंग्स,** पी.एल.सं.: 29230202, 1019 सेट, क्र.सं.: 2, 01241251, (31.05.2024), **सेट ऑफ मैटालिक पाइप,** पी.एल.सं.: 29230044, 865 सेट, क्र.सं.: 3, 01231100A, (03.06.2024),**फोरजिंग ऑफ गैयर वाटर पम्प,** पी.एल.सं.: 16141740, 745 अदद, क्र.सं.: 4, 01241245, (04.06.2024), **एस एस ट्यूब,** पी.एल.सं.: 29070235, 27010.27 मीटर, क्र.सं.: 5, 01241252, (06.06.2024), **स्टील पाइप फिटिंग्स,** पी.एल.सं.: 29230111, 353 सेट, क्र.सं.: 6, 01241256, (10.06.2024), **स्टील पाइप फिटिंग्स,** पी.एल.सं.: 29230366, 135 सेट, क्र.सं.: 7, 01241253, (18.06.2024), **कोर्ड गटेड प्लेक्सिब्ल डकटिंग,** पी.एल.सं.: 29230160, 749 सेट, क्र.सं.: 8, 01241248, (18.06.2024). **एस एस ट्यूब,** पी.एल.सं.: 29120032, 454.255 मीटर, क्र.सं.: 9, 06231227A, (27.05.2024), **केबल सिलिंग एसेम्बली,** पी.एल.सं.: 18461050, 12 अदद, क्र.सं.: 10, 06231550A, (27.05.2024), **लैम्प 15W/75V,** पी.एल.सं.: 18360336, 13 अदद, क्र.सं.: 11, 06231086B, (12.06.2024), **पोस्ट असेम्बली कोंटक्ट,** पी.एल.सं.: 18140178, 42 अदद, क्र.सं.: 12, 06241059, (26.06.2024), **प्लग TCC2 XA-Zone,** पी.एल.सं.: 18010866, 11 अदद, क्र.सं.: 13, 06231082C, (27.06.2024), **कोइल मैग्नेट,** पी.एल.सं.: 18410042, 101 अदद, क्र.सं.: 14, 05245093, (10.06.2024), **एल टी व्हील,** 16 अदद, क्र.सं.: 15, 05231251A, (30.05.2024), **रेवोलविंग बैरल कौलकिंग,** पी.एल.सं.: 72902607, 1000 अदद, क्र.सं.: 16, 05231275B, (28.05.2024), **(I) मेटल ए आर सी वैल्डिंग,** पी.एल.सं.: 76010727, 21700 अदद, **(II) स्टिक एलेक्ट्रोड,** पी.एल.सं.: 76010776, 11950 अदद, **(III) मेटल ए आर सी वैल्डिंग,** पी.एल.सं.: 76011598, 27900 अदद, क्र.सं.:17, 04241090, (31.05.2024), **फिल्टर फ्रेम असेंबली,** पी.एल.सं.: 29480115, 611 सेट, क्र.सं.: 18, 04241087, (29.05.2024), **स्पेसर ,** पी.एल.सं.: 29230100, 7443 अदद, क्र.सं.: 19, 03241009A, (28.05.2024), **कम्प्लीट शेल्ल असेंबली,** पी.एल.सं.: 29176591, 63 सेट, क्र.सं.: 20, 03231355D, (03.06.2024), **डेवेलपमेंटल टेन्डर फॉर सेट ऑफ मेटालिक होज,** पी.एल.सं.: 29610400, 20 सेट, क्र.सं.: 21, 02241310, (10.06.2024), **डिस्टेंस बोलटस,** पी.एल.सं.: 29308896, 650 सेट, क्र.सं.: 22, 02241304, (13.06.2024), **थ्रेडेड बोल्ट,** पी.एल.सं.: 29300850, 4968 अदद, क्र.सं.: 23, 02241326, (24.06.2024), **स्क्रू हेक्स हेड कैप फॉर टीएमएस,** पी.एल.सं.: 29339595, 699 सेट । उक्त निविदाओं का विस्तृत विवरण **www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in** और **www.ireps.gov.in** पर उपलब्ध है । **शुद्धिपत्र: 1,** बीड सं.: ई-04, निविदा संख्या: 02241024A, **नेक्ड डाउन बोल्ट,** पार्ट सं.: 29300848, रिवीजन: 1, निविदा खुलने की विद्यमान दिनांक: 15.05.2024, निविदा खुलने की संशोधित दिनांक: 24.05.2024 । अन्य सभी नियम एवं शर्तें अपरिवर्तित रहेंगी ।

पी.आर. / बरेका / एस-09 — कृते प्रमुख मुख्य सामग्री प्रबंधक

/blwvaranasi "Website: www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in"

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$3.68 bn increase in forex reserves to $641.59 billion for the week to May 3, as per the latest Reserve Bank weekly data.

10-YR OF MODI: TAX REFORMS, CHALLENGES

Though GST mop-up gone up; vague notices, redressal tribunal issues remain

MONIKA YADAV @New Delhi

IN the last 10 years of Modi government rule, India has undergone marked tax reforms focused on streamlining the tax framework, enhancing compliance, and fostering transparency. The implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was a pivotal transformation, revolutionising the indirect tax landscape.

Simultaneously, adjustments in direct tax rates and coverage have been pursued to create a more balanced system. Key reforms common to Customs, GST, income tax, and corporate tax include digitiation for e-filing and digital payments, real-time data sharing to detect tax frauds, faceless assessment and appeals, dispute resolution schemes like Vivad se Vishwas, compliance simplification through prefilled returns, and rate rationalization for competitiveness.

The Modi-led government introduced GST in 2017. It's a unified tax system that replaced various central and state taxes like VAT, excise duty, service tax, etc, keeping in mind the need for cooperative fiscal federalism. "The successes in the indirect tax regime have been significant. The implementation of GST has effectively unified the indirect tax system. The introduction of the Common GST Portal simplified tax filings, while E-invoicing and E-way bills streamlined the movement of goods and curbed tax evasion," said Pratik Jain, Partner with PwC India.

"Tax compliance has improved notably through digitized returns and data autopopulation from E-Invoicing/EWBs. The establishment of the GST Council, comprising representatives from both central and state governments, has facilitated collaborative decision-making on GST matters, reflecting cooperative federalism in action," Jain added.

Since its introduction in FY 2017-2018 with collections at ₹7.19 lakh crore, GST has demonstrated impressive growth. The latest figures for FY24, unveiled on April 1, underscore this trend, with gross GST collections exceeding ₹20 lakh crore. On average, GST revenues have seen a growth of nearly 13% annually.

In the domain of direct taxes, tax filing process has been streamlined through e-filing, corporate tax rates have been lowered to encourage investments, and the Advance Pricing Agreement (APA) program has brought clarity to transfer pricing issues, with a record 125 APAs signed in 2023-24, as per experts. Legislative actions have targeted black money, while technological advancements have bolstered tax administration, leading to enhanced efficiency and enforcement capabilities.

The Modi government introduced the New tax Regime to streamline the personal taxation process by reducing the reliance on various deductions and exemptions. This approach aims to simplify tax compliance though it may offer less flexibility than the Old Regime.

All these measures have seen significant improvement in direct tax collection numbers. In 2013-14, net direct tax collections were at ₹6.38 lakh crore. Fast forward to 2023-24, and they stood impressively at ₹19.18 lakh crore. So, there has been a 200% increase in net direct tax revenue in the last ten years of the Modi regime. Additionally, the total number of ITRs filed in 2022-23 skyrocketed to 7.78 crore, showcasing a remarkable 104.91% increase compared to the 3.80 crore ITRs filed in 2013-14.

Areas of improvement

While the government initiatives have significantly advanced the taxation system, taxpayers still grapple with understanding the complex GST system introduced around seven years ago. Challenges persist, including the intricate tax rate structure, taxation on consideration-less transactions like employer-employee dealings and related party transactions. The uncertain application of pre-GST decisions under the GST framework adds ambiguity. Concurrent investigations by various authorities heighten taxpayer concerns, creating significant hurdles.

According to experts, despite industry expansions and business restructurings, practical obstacles necessitate immediate governmental attention to optimize benefits. Although the advance ruling mechanism aimed to provide clarity and prompt issue resolution, conflicting rulings across states have escalated litigations, deviating from its intended purpose of aiding taxpayers and fostering certainty.

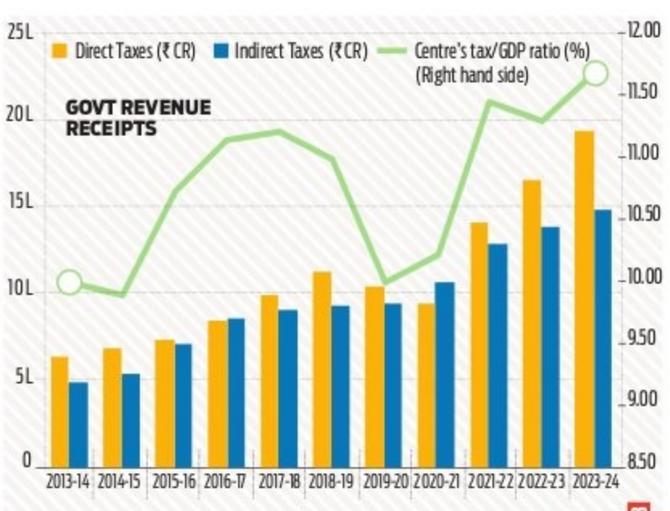
"The vague notices/orders lacking detailed reasoning are also disrupting the business environment since the taxpayers have no option than to approach high courts in these cases, as well.

Non-constitution of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunals has become a serious cause of concern for the taxpayers since the only recourse available with them, for all the remedies as on date, is to approach high courts. The tribunals are anticipated to function from July or August," said Shivam Mehta, Executive Partner, Lakshmikumaran and Sridharan.

Meanwhile, in the realm of direct taxes, areas for improvement persist. Despite efforts to simplify, the Income Tax Act remains complex. As per experts, high personal income tax rates compared to global standards may hinder compliance.

High personal income tax rates compared to corporate taxes have resulted in lower corporate tax collection vi-a-vis personal income tax collection. For example, personal income tax collection in FY24 was ₹10.44 lakh crore compared to ₹9.11 lakh crore collected through corporate taxes. The gap between corporate and personal income taxes is also increasing with every passing year.

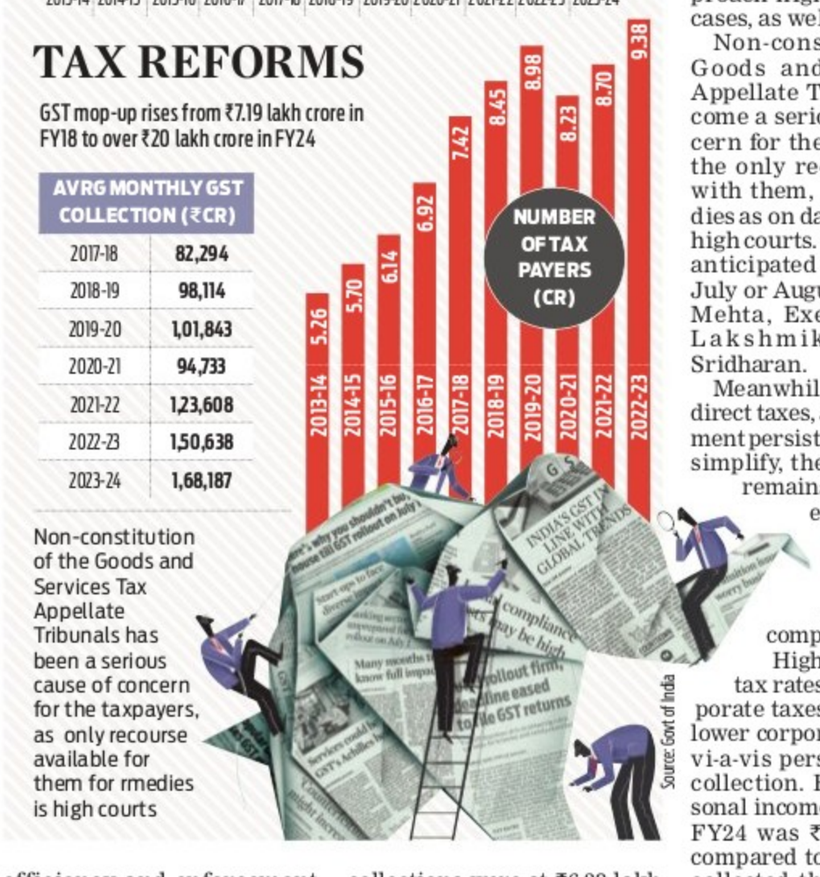
Litigations stemming from aggressive tax claims and transfer pricing disputes pose challenges. Significant strides are needed to broaden the tax base effectively. Moreover, delays in tax refunds and assessment processing contribute to taxpayer grievances, highlighting the need for enhanced efficiency in these areas.



TAX REFORMS

GST mop-up rises from ₹7.19 lakh crore in FY18 to over ₹20 lakh crore in FY24

AVRG MONTHLY GST COLLECTION (₹CR)	
2017-18	82,294
2018-19	98,114
2019-20	1,01,843
2020-21	94,733
2021-22	1,23,608
2022-23	1,50,638
2023-24	1,68,187



Non-constitution of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunals has been a serious cause of concern for the taxpayers, as only recourse available for them for rmedies is high courts

PERSPECTIVE

INHERITANCE TAX: AN ECONOMIC BLUNDER

ANANT MERATHIA

THE belief of leaving behind an inheritance or legacy for one's progeny has remained in the human psyche for time immemorial. However, opinions differ based on how accumulated wealth over a lifetime should be distributed after an individual's lifetime. Recently, Sam Pitroda, the Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, has spoken in favour of introducing an "inheritance tax" in India. Citing the US as an example, he highlighted how a significant percentage of wealth is taxed by the government, and the rest is inherited by an individual's descendants.

Pitroda spoke in favour of leaving a portion of one's wealth to the public. This proposition has not just sparked a controversy across the country.

What Is Inheritance Tax?

Inheritance tax refers to the transfer of property or assets to heirs upon the demise of their previous owner. This process is governed through legal frameworks and norms which differ from country to country. In France, the same is governed under droits de succession law. In this, French citizens that inherit properties pay between 5-60% in inheritance tax, while additionally having 100,000 Euros as an allowance for direct descendants and lower amounts for indirect descendants.

In the US, different states have different rates of inheritance taxes. This is greatly debated in the US itself, in which individuals on the conservative side of the political spectrum, feel that such taxes cause double taxation -- the wealth accumulated had already been taxed, and now is being taxed once again when being inherited by the descendants, thus disincentivizing people in the lower and middle classes of society, who have worked tirelessly to accumulate the property that they have.

This has also been protested by small businesses and famer's unions such as the National Farmers Union that has been advocating for the Simplification of the Estate Tax. Their worry is that even after death, a percentage is taken away once again by the government, leaving a small part of the initial property or asset.

Inheritance Tax: A bane on the Indian economy

The re-introduction of a probable inheritance tax in India is concerning, as there is a complex interplay of multiple variables that must be taken into account. While proponents in favour of an inheritance tax argue that it will create a more equitable distribution of wealth from the rich sections of society to the economically weaker sections of society, the potential consequences of this cannot be ignored. Considering the unique socio-economic and political landscape of India, such a tax, will adversely affect the accumulation of wealth amongst the aspirational middle class families in India and

EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

if one could include the families a little below and above it typically referred to as "upper-middle class" or otherwise. Any thoughts of reintroducing such laws, therefore, would be nothing short of being regressive.

In 1985, the administration under Late Rajiv Gandhi's government argued and abolished the Estate Duty Act of 1963 which was as high as 85% due to low revenue generation, high administrative costs and failure to reduce socio-economic inequality.

Just to draw a leaf out of the ancient Indic wisdom that we often tend to forget; Kautilya's Arthashastra, argues that taxation must be limited, and minimal so as to not prevent the growth and productivity of a land.

Impact on Entrepreneurship and Wealth Acquisition in India

The concept of inheritance tax would be suicidal for a country like India, as there is already certain amount of discontent amongst the honest taxpayers that they do not get any significant benefits like some of the western countries and further they rarely use the facilities provided by the Government; in effect indicating that tax collected from them is used for benefits and schemes for other segments of the society.

Now coming to the wealthier sections of the society; if "inheritance tax" is thrust on them, it is certainly going to deter their entrepreneurial spirits; investments and we would certainly be headed for a capital flight and loss of smart and skilled talent as they might seek to relocate to other jurisdictions to secure and manage their wealth better. It would also in a way push people to more favourably look at offshore and low tax jurisdictions which would be a significant detriment for a growing India which is on its way to becoming the third largest economy globally in the span of 3 to 4 years. The other concern with "inheritance taxes" would further be non-declaration of wealth, evasion of taxes and ultimately the introduction of a parallel economy in the country. All the efforts of the present government right from demonetisation to digitisation of the economy would go for a toss and hence this would be "regressive" in true sense.

Way forward & Conclusion

In a fast developing economy like India, where infrastructure and social security systems are still evolving, incentivising private investment and entrepreneurship should take precedence over imposing additional taxes on wealth transfer. The creation and growth of the wealth over the past few years is also attributable to the economy doing extremely well, being consistent amidst a pandemic, multiple wars and also to a reasonable extent the exceptional performance of the corporate sector and the associated capital markets. Economic suppression of the middle class which is doing well on merit under the garb of "redistribution of wealth" would be a huge economic blunder if attempted.

Anant Merathia is a corporate lawyer who specialises in corporate disputes in New Delhi & Chennai. He has also authored the book "Defaulter's Paradise Lost"

SER's remarkable freight loading performance continues

Kolkata: South Eastern Railway has loaded 17.07 million tonne (MT) of originating freight in the month of April, 2024 as against 16.64MT loaded in April 2023, registering a growth of 2.52%. South Eastern Railway achieved record freight loading of 211.6MT in the last financial year (i.e.2023-24) and this increasing trend has continued in the first month of current fiscal. There has been a rise of 5.47% in originating freight revenue in April, 2024 in comparison to April, 2023. In April, 2024, revenue generation from originating freight loading has been ₹1547.73 crore as against ₹1467.45 crore in the same month of the previous year. SER has loaded 4.38MT of coal in April, 2024, which is 5.80% more than the corresponding month of last fiscal. Other major commodities of freight loading during April, 2024 were Iron Ore, Pig Iron & Finished Steel, Cement, Food grains, Fertilizers etc.

Business & Beyond

Goodness of naturals, Power of Actives- WOW Skin Science's revamped product proposition

WOW Skin Science, India's leading premium beauty and wellness brand, announced its revamped product proposition- 'Activated Naturals'. This superior product platform is the result of extensive research conducted by the company into customer preferences and demands. It combines the safety of nature-backed ingredients with potency of advanced science-backed actives to address a variety of personal care needs of consumers. According to a recent report by McKinsey & Company, the new age consumer is reshaping the beauty and personal care industry by demonstrating a strong loyalty to brands that align with their values and evolving preferences. Given that today's millennial and gen Z consumer want products which are efficacious and show results quickly, WOW Skin Science understood that just natural products are insufficient to deliver results fast, and hence formulations need to be both – safe to use and yet highly efficacious. Through extensive research and consumer validation, the product offerings of WOW Skin Science were reengineered to deliver on far better performance with new age formulations along with scientifically backed actives.

HPCL reports stellar financial performance

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) has reported stellar financial performance with a record Consolidated Profit after Tax (PAT) of ₹16,015 crore during FY 2023-24 (Consolidated Net Loss of ₹6,980 crore during the previous financial year). The Standalone PAT during FY 2023-24 was also highest ever at ₹14,694 crore (Standalone Net Loss of ₹8,974 crore during the previous financial year). The Standalone PAT for the period Jan-Mar 2024 is ₹2,843 crore registering an increase of 437% over PAT of ₹529 crore reported during previous quarter Oct-Dec 2023. (PAT during the Jan-Mar 2023 was ₹3,223 crore). The Company has reported Revenue from operations of ₹1,21,532 crore for the quarter Jan-Mar 2024 registering an increase of 6.2% over Revenue from operations of ₹1,14,445 crore reported for the corresponding quarter of previous year. For the FY 2023-24, the Revenue from operations stood at ₹4,61,638 crore (₹4,66,192 crore during the previous year). The Average GRMs (Gross of export duty) for the FY 2023-24 were US$ 9.08 per barrel (US$ 12.09 per barrel during the previous financial year). Average GRMs (Gross of export duty) for the period Jan-Mar 2024 were US$ 6.95 per barrel (US$ 14.01 per barrel during the corresponding period of previous year).

Eicher Motors Q4 net profit up 18% to ₹1,070 cr; revenue at ₹4,256 cr

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @New Delhi

EICHER MOTORS on Saturday reported an 18% increase in consolidated profit after tax (PAT) to ₹1,070 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2024, driven by higher sales.

The company posted a profit after tax of Rs 906 crore in the same period last year. The company's total revenue increased 12% to ₹4,256 crore in the January-March quarter of financial year 2023024 compared to ₹3,804 crore in the corresponding quarter of 2022-23, Eicher Motors said in a statement.

Royal Enfield, the two-wheeler division of the company, recorded sales of 2,27,925 motorcycles in the fourth quarter, up 6 per cent from 2,14,685 units in the year-ago period.

For the financial year 2023-2024, the company reported a 37% increase in net profit to ₹4,001 crore as compared to ₹2,914 crore for the financial year 2023-24.

The company's revenue from operations increased 14.5% to ₹16,536 crore from ₹14,442 crore recorded in financial year 2022-23. During the last fiscal, Royal Enfield's registered sales rose 9 per cent to 9,12,732 units from 8,34,895 units in financial year 2022-23.

The company said its board recommended a final dividend aggregating to ₹1,396.41 crore at ₹51 per share for the financial year ended March 31, 2024.

Q4 EARNINGS

Union Bank net profit up 18% on lower provisions

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @New Delhi

STATE-owned Union Bank of India on Saturday reported an 18.36% increase in its consolidated net profit for the March quarter to ₹3,328 crore, helped by lower provisions.

For the financial year 2023-24, the lender reported a consolidated net profit of ₹13,797 crore against ₹8,512 crore in the year-ago period. In the quarter under review, its standalone net profit rose to ₹3,311 crore from ₹2,782 crore a year ago. The core net interest income grew 14.38% to ₹9,437 crore on an 11.7% growth in advances and widening of net interest margin to 3.10% from 2.97% in the year-ago period.

It expects a fall in NIMs to 2.8-3 per cent, she said, adding that the targets will be reviewed midway through the year. The non-interest income declined by over 10% to ₹4,707 crore, primarily due to halving of recoveries from written off accounts. For FY25, the bank is targeting the overall recoveries to come at ₹16,000 crore against over ₹18,000 crore in FY24. The overall provisions declined to ₹3,222 crore from ₹4,041 crore in the year-ago period. The fresh slippages rose to ₹3,202 crore from the ₹2,687 crore a year ago.

Pant suspensed for slow over-rate, to miss RCB clash

Delhi Capitals captain Rishabh Pant will miss Sunday's crucial match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru after he was handed a one-match suspension for maintaining a slow over-rate for the third time this IPL season. Pant was also fined Rs 30 lakh for the Code of Conduct breach that took place during DC's 20-run win against Rajasthan Royals on May 7.

PLAY-OFF RACE GETS INTENSE

With just a week more to go before the regular season ends, a look at which teams remain in playoff contention...

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS (Q)

They have already won nine. While there's no significant financial incentive to finish first or second, their last league match — against Rajasthan Royals — could be a dress rehearsal as it's likely they will meet in the playoffs. One more win will guarantee them a top two finish.

Remaining fixtures: Gujarat (Monday), Rajasthan (May 19)

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Need just one win from their remaining fixtures to advance. Worryingly though, they have run into some bad form as they have lost each of their last two games. They would want to finish one or two as then they will get two attempts to reach the final. In 2023 also, they were in a great position to advance but lost three of their final five games to finish fifth.

Remaining fixtures: Chennai (Sunday), Punjab (Wednesday), Kolkata (May 19)

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

The advantage they hold is a superior NRR over both Delhi and Lucknow. To bring that into play, they need to win both games. As long as they win both, they will put themselves in pole position to at least go through to the eliminator in Ahmedabad. Potentially, it could be a direct shoot-out between Bengaluru and them for the final spot.

Remaining fixtures: Rajasthan (Sunday), Bengaluru (May 18).

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

They hold two significant advantages over the chasing pack. Both of their remaining fixtures are at home and as long they win both, they will advance. What's more, both of those fixtures are either teams who need multiple miracles to advance (Gujarat) or against a team who are already out (Punjab). Because they don't play till Thursday, they will know exactly they need. **Remaining fixtures:** Gujarat (Thursday), Punjab (May 19)

DELHI CAPITALS

A thrilling fightback has helped them move up the leaderboard. Having won three of the last four games, they face two direct rivals for the fourth spot. After facing Bengaluru (in 7th), they run into Lucknow (6th) a few days later. Win both of those and Chennai will be under all sorts of pressure to produce the goods against Bengaluru on Sunday.

Remaining fixtures: Bengaluru (Sunday), Lucknow (Tuesday)

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

Three losses in their last four games have cost them dear. What may compound matters is that both their remaining fixtures are in high-scoring grounds (Delhi and Mumbai), a template that doesn't necessarily suit them. Because of their below-average NRR, the best they can hope for is to win both of them games and hope Chennai, Bengaluru and Delhi lose one game each.

Remaining fixtures: Delhi (Tuesday), Mumbai (Friday)

BENGALURU AND GUJARAT

The best case scenario for both Gujarat and Bengaluru is for 14 points and hope the other teams lose ground in the last week. Bengaluru can make some headway as they play teams above them in the leaderboard but even if they win both of those fixtures, it will come down to what Lucknow do for the fourth spot. Because of Gujarat's NRR, they are further back.

Remaining fixtures: ● Bengaluru: Delhi (Sunday), Chennai (May 19) ● Gujarat: Kolkata (Monday), Hyderabad (Thursday)

Note Bengaluru and Gujarat need to win both their games to remain in contention. Punjab and Mumbai have been eliminated. At this point, it looks likely that Rajasthan and Kolkata may face each other in the first qualifier with Hyderabad likely facing one of Lucknow/Chennai/Delhi in the first eliminator.

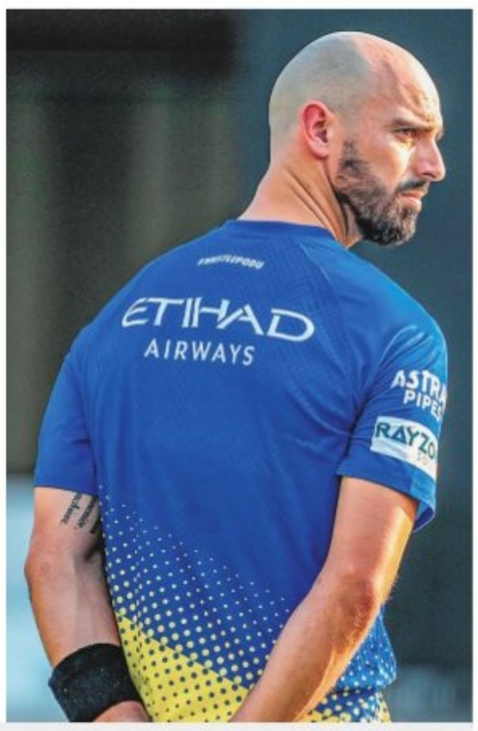
BEATING THE HEAT

With CSK playing an afternoon home fixture a day after the evening game in Ahmedabad, **Kalyani Mangale** looks at the work that goes into help players' recover & more...

SATURDAY was yet another hot summer day at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai. The official temperature of the city touched 33 degrees Celsius, but it was so hot that the 'feels like' feature of the weather app would have told you a number in the mid 40s and you would have easily believed it. Such was the condition near the venue that just after 10 minutes of exposure to the sunlight, your mobile phone would stop working because of overheating. If the machine humans created to withstand the extremes could not work in that much heat, imagine how hard it must be for cricketers.

That is where the Strength and Conditioning experts along with the support staff come in to make sure the players are fit enough to take part in the game. "The first thing the players need is to get into active recovery mode," Ramji Srinivasan, the Founder & Director of Sports Dynamix, a Chennai-based sports fitness centre told this daily. "A protocol for active recovery for all the players and also for individual players depending on the skill set, given how much the player has bowled or batted is required. All those things need to be taken into consideration in embarking on recovery protocols. Proper hydration also counts. Testing the urine colour and urine-specific gravity gives a correct reading on whether the player is hydrated or not. Along with good recovery protocols, a proper meal is vital. Combined with all these things, (a player is required to have) a good eight hours of sleep," Srinivasan added.

> *It is not one size fits all, every player is different. Some of them have played all the matches, while some have played as Impact Substitutes. Those who are playing all the matches, need to be managed very well, including the active and passive recovery protocols*
>
> Ramji Srinivasan, former India S & C coach



With the first afternoon game in Chennai's hot and humid conditions (Super Kings versus Rajasthan Royals), the hydration protocol will take centre stage. "If you play at 7.30 in the evening, the conditions are different than playing at 2.30 or 3 in the afternoon. So wherever you are, whether it's hot and humid or dry heat, it is going to be different, that's why you need to prepare yourself well ahead. From food to hydration, to recovery, everything needs to be planned very well ahead. Because Chennai will be very hot and humid the players need to be hydrated well ahead of the match. Hydration protocol includes checking the urine colour. Check the weight before, during, and post-match to see the amount of water loss and have 1.5 times the quantity of that. Along with that, they will use electrolytes. Checking the urine's specific gravity is important as that gives a correct picture of hydration. So, hydration along with electrolytes is important to prevent any sort of cramping or blackout issues, or even sudden deaths," he said.

Sunday Special

With the IPL season coming to its business end, especially in the intense heat the country has seen, it is natural for players to feel the fatigue settling in. However, Srinivasan has an answer to that. "That is where workload management comes into the picture. Workload management incorporates all these protocols into a place apart from workout schedules and other things. In workload management individualizing the needs is very important," he mentioned. In the end, Srinivasan boils all of these protocols down to the dedication of the support staff and how well they implement the existing policies to help players recover best with not a lot of turnaround time at hand. "The entire process and protocols and how it is designed depend on the support staff, how fresh they keep the players."

Rajasthan Royal's Donovan Ferreira echoed the same sentiments while giving credit to the medical staff behind the scenes for keeping the players fit, hydrated and ready to go in the different weather conditions all over India in the past two months. "We have an amazing medical team that keeps us hydrated and ready for the game. You cannot really be 100% prepared because this heat and the humidity is crazy," the all-rounder said.

Whatever maybe the result on Sunday afternoon, the strength and conditioning and other support staff of both teams are already the winners.

Desperate Super Kings seek victory in high-stakes clash

ASHOK VENUGOPAL @ Chennai

CHENNAI Super Kings will be under immense pressure when they take the field against Rajasthan Royals at the MA Chidambaram stadium here on Sunday afternoon. After the hammering they received at the hands of Gujarat Titans on Friday, CSK have to win the remaining two games at all costs in order to keep their play-off hopes alive.

Without the services of Mustafizur Rahman, Matheesha Pathirana and Deepak Chahar, it has not been an easy ride for the Ruturaj Gaikwad-led side so far. With just a day's break between the Gujarat and Rajasthan games, CSK bowlers need to mentally tune themselves for the big clash on Sunday. "We were a little bit handicapped by the absence of some players. The players who were playing on Friday (against Gujarat) did really well in the last game, so the confidence was high. Sometimes you do all the right things but good batting can put you under pressure," said CSK head coach Fleming after the loss against Titans.

What hurt CSK chances against Gujarat was the inability of the top-order consisting of the likes of Ajinkya Rahane, Rachin Ravindra and skipper Gaikwad to counter attack Gujarat. This is one area that the CSK batters need to work against Rajasthan in order to get back to winning ways. The pitch, the same surface that was used for GT and Lucknow Super Giants clashes, looks good and should be full of runs.

The bigger talking point amidst all this is whether it could be the last game for MS Dhoni at this venue. It has been the buzz in the lead up to the match, especially after CSK's loss to GT which left them in a precarious position. While Dhoni or the team management has not said anything officially, should CSK lose and not advance, there is a high chance that it might be the last home game for the 42-year-old former skipper. Chennai has been a second home for Dhoni right from the time he started playing IPL. It was where he made his Test debut and it is the venue where he recorded his only Test double hundred. It was with CSK he won five IPL titles and two Champions League titles. Will Sunday be his final IPL game in Chennai, only time will tell.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

Rajasthan Royals' Jos Buttler during a practice session on Saturday | P RAVIKUMAR

KOLKATA FIRST TEAM TO ENTER PLAY-OFFS

KOLKATA: Kolkata became the first team to advance to the playoff stage as they beat Mumbai Indians by 18 runs in a rain-curtailed encounter on Saturday night. Defending 158, Varun Chakravarthy and Sunil Narine, put the squeeze in the middle overs, restricting MI to 139/8. **Brief scores:** KKR 157/7 in 16 ovs (Venkatesh 42; Chawla 2/28) **bt** MI 139/8 in 16 ovs (Kishan 40, Varun 2/17).

TODAY'S GAMES

Chennai Super Kings **vs** Rajasthan Royals, Chennai, 3.30PM

Royal Challengers Bengaluru **vs** Delhi Capitals, Bengaluru, 7.30PM

Live on Star Sports and JioCinema

BCCI to make changes in domestic calendar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

WITH the 2024-25 domestic season zooming into view, the BCCI has proposed some significant changes, including having a part of the Ranji Trophy before the multiple white-ball tournaments. The upcoming season will begin with the Duleep Trophy, where four teams, picked by national selectors, will compete. It will be followed by the Irani Cup and the first five league games of the Ranji Trophy before Syed Mushtaq and Vijay Hazare tournaments. After that, the Ranji Trophy will resume. Similarly, the women's inter-zonal teams will be selected by the national selectors and not the respective zones.

Meanwhile, weather and gap between matches will be carefully considered, the latter especially to give players ample time for recovery through the season. Toss will be eliminated in the CK Nayudu Trophy with the visiting team getting to pick. There will also be a new points system for the same tournament, aiming to promote balanced performances like awarding points for batting and bowling performance along with first innings lead and outright win points. The new system will be reviewed at the end of the season and then a decision will be taken whether or not to implement the same in Ranji Trophy. The proposed changes will be implemented after the approval of BCCI Apex council.

Wrestler Aman qualifies for Oly; heartbreak for Deepak

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

AMAN Sehrawat entered the final of the 57kg weight category at the World Olympic Games Qualifier in Istanbul, Turkey on Saturday to qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympics. However, it was curtains for the Tokyo Olympian Deepak Punia as he lost his first bout against Zushen Lin of China, who also failed to reach the final. Had the Chinese reached the final, Punia could have qualified through the repechage round.

Sujeet Kalkal also made it to the semifinal in the 65kg but lost the crucial bout against the 2023 Asian Games gold medallist Tulga Tumur Ochir of Mongolia 6-1. Sujeet still has a chance to qualify as on Sunday he will first compete in the bronze medal bout and if he wins, the wrestler will take on another bronze medallist in the play-off for securing the quota for the Games. As per the qualification criterion, only two finalists apart from the winner of the play-off between two bronze medallists secure an Olympic quota each in every weight category. Apart from the trio, Jaideep (74kg) made it to the quarterfinal but lost the bout. The other two Indian wrestlers — Deepak (97kg) and Sumit Malik (125kg) — however, bowed out of the tournaments as their respective opponents, who defeated them earlier, were also knocked out in the subsequent round. Aman overcame Georgi V Vangelov of Bulgaria 10-4 before outclassing Ukrainian Andrii Yatsenko 12-2 by technical superiority to make it to the semifinals. In the semifinals, he defeated Chongsong Han of Korea 12-2 to become the first Indian male wrestler to qualify.

Sujeet had a tough first bout as he edged past Umidjon Jalolov of Uzbekistan 3-2. Jalolov was the U-20 world champion in 65kg when Sujeet finished third. Sujeet then claimed a 10-0 win by technical superiority over Junsik Yun of Korea to enter the quarterfinal wherein he defeated Lachlan M McNeil of Canada 10-0. In the 74kg, Jaideep defeated Vasile Diacon of Moldova first before overpowering Simon Marchl of Austria 11-0 by technical superiority in the next round. He, however, was defeated by Taimuraz Salkazanov of Slovakia 3-0 in the quarterfinal. Salkazanov defeated local favourite Soner Demirtas to make Jaideep eligible for the repechage round.

Punia, who missed a bronze medal at the Tokyo Games in the dying seconds, was leading 3-0 against Lin at the break. The Chinese wrestler then had a takedown and a gut-wrench to lead 4-3. Punia then equalised with a stepout but a late takedown by Lin meant the Indian wrestler lost the bout 6-4. Lin then defeated Patrik Puespoeki of Hungary by technical superiority to reach the quarterfinal. Vasyl Mykhailov of Ukraine defeated Lin 6-3 to put an end to Punia's campaign.

His namesake Deepak, who competed in the 97kg, lost 1-5 to Mogomedgadji Omardibirovich Nurov of North Macedonia in his first bout. Nurov was then defeated by Erik S Thiele of Germany in the next round, which also ended Deepak's hope of making it to the repechage. Sumit Malik's loss to Aaron A Johnson of Jamaica was surprising. The Jamaican wrestler was then beaten by Aiaal Lazarev of Kyrgyzstan 10-0 in the 1/8 round. The loss also ended the campaign of Sumit.

EXPRESS READ

Bhaker, Bhanwala on course for top finish

BHOPAL: Manu Bhaker and Anish Bhanwala stayed on course for a top finish at the Olympic Selection Trials (OST) for rifle/pistol in qualification rounds of their respective events. Anish topped the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol (587), while Manu came third in women's 25m pistol (585).

Man City move step closer to title

LONDON: Manchester City swept to the top of the Premier League as Josko Gvardiol's double inspired a 4-0 victory against Fulham on Saturday. Pep Guardiola's side are two wins away from lifting an fourth successive English title after a commanding display at Craven Cottage.

Anderson to retire after Lord's Test against WI

LONDON: James Anderson on Saturday announced that the first Test against the West Indies this summer will be his final appearance for England, bringing down the curtains on an illustrious career spanning over 20 years. "Hi everyone. Just a note to say that the first Test of the summer at Lord's will be my last Test," Anderson wrote on Instagram.

The curious case of boxer Parveen

ANMOL GURUNG @ Chennai

THERE'S no question over Parveen Hooda's talent. She has won medals at multiple levels (Worlds, Asian Championships, Asian Games). But there are question marks over her future as she has not had a competitive fight in over 200 days. That is quite telling as she is supposed to lock horns with the best in the business very soon during the Olympics.

As was clear during a very recent interaction with this daily, she had been working diligently every day to ensure that she's ready for the mother of all events in Europe, which is scheduled to be held in July-August.

However, the last time she had a competitive fight was during the Asian Games, where she had won a bronze medal to secure the all-important quota. That momentous outcome had transpired on October 1, last year. After being initially included (she was part of list approved by SAI TOPS Division, dated May 6) in the Indian squad for the Elorda Cup, scheduled to be held from May 12 to 19 in Astana (Kazakhstan), she has been removed from the plans as the team, sans Parveen, departed on May 9. Nikhat Zareen, the other quota winner, is part of the team photo that was posted by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI). This is Nikhat's second competitive event after the Asian Games. Nikhat, the double World Championships gold medallist (2022 & 2023), had also taken part in the Strandja Cup in Bulgaria earlier this year (February 1 to 12) along with other quota winners — Preeti (54kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg). Parveen had given that event a miss as well.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

Chopra, Jena among big names in Federation Cup

TANMAY DAS @ Bhubaneswar

OLYMPIC gold medallist and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, local favourite Asian Games medallist Kishore Kumar Jena and the core group of 400m runners are raring to go for the season's first domestic track and field competition, the 27th National Federation Senior Athletics Competition, which is also a Paris Olympic Games qualification event, at Kalinga Stadium here from May 12 to 15.

It will be the first time since the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, Chopra will be seen in action on Indian soil. Both Chopra and Jena have already qualified for the Paris Olympics and a domestic meet in Bhubaneswar will be part of their preparation for the sporting extravaganza. Chopra claimed second position behind Jacub Vadlejch (88.38m) of Czech Republic with a throw of 88.36m, while Jena's best attempt was 76.31m on Friday night at Doha Diamond League, the season opening competition. Jena finished ninth. Meanwhile, the event in Bhubaneswar has attracted more than 700 athletes. Besides, athletes from Bangladesh and Maldives have also confirmed their entries.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

An FIR has been filed against Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar for alleged MCC violation. It is based on a BJP complaint against his remark that then ATS chief Hemant Karkare was not killed by the bullet of terrorist Ajmal Kasab during the 26/11 attack

ILLUSTRATION: SOURAV ROY

POLL CODE
No easy work for EC

PREETHA NAIR @New Delhi

CIRCA 1994, T N Seshan, the 10th Chief Election Commissioner of India, wrote to the then Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao to remove his two ministers Sitaram Kesari and Kalpnath Rai from the cabinet for reportedly violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during state assembly elections. Known as the 'father of electoral reforms', Seshan has been credited for his exemplary efforts in implementing the MCC in its letter and spirit and changing the electoral process in the country.

Cut to 2024, the lacunas in the system still plague the Election Commission of India (ECI), the most powerful electoral body, in ensuring free and fair polls in the country. With the country nearly halfway through the seven-phase general elections, the ECI is already been inundated with hundreds of complaints alleging violations of the MCC by political parties and candidates.

What is MCC

It is a set of guidelines to regulate political parties and candidates to ensure free and fair elections. The code comes into force the moment the EC announces the poll schedule and remains operational until the process is concluded. Divided into eight parts, the MCC deals with guidelines regarding election speeches, conduct, cost of exchequer, portfolios, election manifestos, and processions, among others.

Under the MCC, the government is not permitted to announce any major scheme which could influence voters. The MCC does not enjoy any statutory backing. The ECI draws its power to conduct free and fair elections from Article 324 of the Constitution. The MCC is an idea evolved by political parties, says former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) N Gopalaswami. The MCC originated in Kerala in 1960, he told this newspaper.

"In Kerala, all political parties came together and decided to formulate a list of dos and don'ts for parties during elections. Later, the political parties wanted the ECI to helm it, and the guidelines were revised further," he said.

"The MCC was first issued by ECI under the title of 'Minimum Code of Conduct' on September 26, 1968, during the mid-term elections 1968-69. The code was further revised in 1979, 1982, 1991, and 2013," according to a book published by the ECI.

Under the MCC, parties and candidates are banned from invoking religion and caste to woo voters. Mosques, churches, temples or any other places of worship should not be used for campaigns. The MCC also prohibits criticism of a candidate's private life. It stipulates that all criticism must be confined to the policies, work, and programmes of a candidate or a party. The guidelines also say that a ruling party cannot advertise at the cost of the public exchequer for its political campaigning or achievements of its government. Parties are mandated not to engage in activities or deliver speeches that can stoke tension or hatred between different communities, castes or religions. The MCC states that the parties in power at the Centre and in the states should ensure that they do not use their official position for campaigning. Ministers and other government authorities cannot announce financial grants in any form.

Speaking to this newspaper, former Chief Election Commissioner V S Sampath said that though the MCC is not legally binding, violations can lead to legal repercussions under relevant laws. "It is incorrect to say that MCC doesn't have powers. For instance, if a candidate is censured by the EC for hate speech or any other MCC violation, it can even tilt the results," says Sampath.

Certain violations of the MCC fall under the Indian Penal Code 1860, Code of Criminal Procedure 1973, and the Representation of the People Act, 1951. The ECI may send a "show cause notice" to the accused party and seek a response within a specified period. The party can either admit the mistake and offer an apology or reject the charges. If the candidate doesn't render an apology and is found guilty, he may receive a written warning from the ECI. Sometimes, EC could ban a candidate from campaigning for a while," he says.

There is also a provision that if any party disobeys the ECI and violates the MCC despite repeated warnings, the poll body can withdraw the election symbol and derecognise the party. "The MCC will be effective only if the commission takes action with alacrity. That is most important," said Sampath.

Key issues

On Friday, several leaders of the Opposition INDIA bloc submitted a memorandum to the ECI on various electoral issues and the alleged violations of the model of conduct by the ruling BJP during the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. They took exception to the ECI's reluctance to act against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's alleged model code of conduct violations. On April 11, a civil society group of 87 former civil servants, called the 'Constitutional Conduct Group', wrote to the ECI on the lack of a level playing field in the ongoing polls.

However, on April 16, a month after the MCC came into effect, the poll body, in a press release, asserted that swift actions were taken to ensure equal play for all political parties. It said various political parties and candidates had filed about 200 complaints under the MCC. "Of these, action has been taken in 169 cases," said the commission, adding it took action in 38 out of the 51 complaints filed by the BJP, and 51 of the 59 complaints by the Congress. Out of the 90 complaints filed by other parties, 80 got redressal, said the ECI. It also received 16 delegations from seven political parties, lodging complaints regarding MCC violations.

The commission also shared data from the cVigil app, which allows citizens to report violations. A total of 2,68,080 complaints have been filed through the portal, of which 2,67,762 cases were addressed in less than 100 minutes on an average. Speaking to this newspaper, former CEC O P Rawat said complaints regarding MCC are normally disposed of quickly. "During my tenure, complaints regarding MCC violations used to be addressed swiftly. The documents and evidence presented by the parties were thoroughly examined, and actions taken without delay," he said.

He further said that the cVigil app hastened the disposal of MCC complaints in a big way. "The cVigil complaints during Lok Sabha 2019 polls were 1.42 lakh, and nearly 1.10 lakh were found correct. The results were reported to the complainant within 100 minutes of filing the complaint, and the EC took appropriate action," he said.

Actions taken by EC

Some of the actions initiated by the EC after the imposition of MCC include an advisory issued on March 21 to the Centre against sending WhatsApp messages on the government programme, 'Viksit Bharat'. The action came after widespread protests from Opposition parties and the civil society.

While the ECI had sent notices to the various political parties over MCC violations, Opposition parties allege that the poll body acted in a partisan manner by censuring them more than the ruling BJP and its allies. On May 2, the EC directed all political parties to stop enrolling or registering voters for post-election beneficiary-oriented schemes under the "guise of surveys", saying it amounts to corrupt practice under election law. The advisory came after a complaint by the BJP regarding the Congress' "Ghar Ghar Guarantee" outreach to the people, which the saffron party claimed was a "corrupt practice amounting to bribery".

On May 7, the ECI directed X, (formerly Twitter), to take down an objectionable animated video shared by the Karnataka BJP handle, saying that the post violated the "extant legal framework". Citing the differential treatment, an opposition leader points out that a Congress social media team member was arrested recently on complaints by the BJP on a doctored video involving Union home minister Amit Shah.

On May 1, the EC barred former Telangana chief minister and Bharat Rashtra Samithi chief K Chandrashekar Rao from campaigning for 48 hours for making "derogatory and objectionable statements" against the Congress in Sircilla. On April 29, the EC issued a show cause notice to BJP MLA from North Tripura, Jadab Lal Nath, for allegedly misbehaving with a booth-level worker on election day, April 26. On April 15, a Thiruvananthapuram MCC nodal officer warned Congress leader Shashi Tharoor for making "unverified allegations" against BJP candidate and Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

In an unusual move, the ECI also made political party heads liable for the violation of MCC by their star campaigners. On April 25, the ECI issued notices to the presidents of the BJP and the Congress on complaints against Prime Minister Modi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on the violation of MCC during their speeches. While the Congress raised the PM's allegations against the Congress's minority appeasement, the BJP alleged that Rahul was making false claims of poverty and other issues in his speeches. The Congress also listed several instances where Modi reiterated his allegations against Congress.

"Usually, notices are sent to an individual directly rather than to the party. If the individual is not complying after repeated warnings, then the EC sends advisories to parties as a last resort," said an officer who didn't want to be named.

Past violations

During the 2019 elections, the ECI temporarily prohibited Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, former Union minister Maneka Gandhi, BSP chief Mayawati and SP leader Azam Khan from campaigning for violating the model code of conduct.

Another controversy erupted in 2020 after Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa dissented and resigned. Lavasa's premature exit came after his dissenting note to the ECI that gave a clean chit to Modi and Shah on MCC violation during campaigning.

The ECI issued a notice in November 2023 to Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for allegedly making remarks against Modi during the Madhya Pradesh assembly election. During the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, the EC banned BJP leader Amit Shah from participating in any public rallies after he made a hate speech. The commission lifted the ban after he assured the poll body that he would not disturb law and order in UP.

V S Sampath, who served the office from 2012 to 2015, recollects how the then prime minister Manmohan Singh sought permission from the ECI to visit the Golden Temple during the Punjab assembly elections. "Mr Singh wrote to the ECI and assured that it's purely a personal visit and there won't be any election-related activity. We didn't find any reason to stop the visit," he said.

Legal teeth?

While many argue that strict implementation of the MCC is possible only by making it legally enforceable, Rawat says that the model code should remain out of the purview of courts. "If the MCC is legalised, the lengthy legal proceedings will delay the electoral process. Elections have to be completed within a time frame. That's why I oppose it," says Rawat.

In 2013, a parliamentary panel recommended that the MCC be granted legal backing and included in the RPI Act, 1951. However, it didn't materialise.

According to Prof Jagdeep Chhokar, founder of the nonprofit Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), the MCC cannot be given legal teeth. "This is not a legally enforceable document. Once it is legalised, it will go to courts, and there will be an inordinate delay in the electoral process," said Chhokar, adding that the onus is on political parties to regulate their functioning.

In 1999, the Law Commission of India said that political parties should be made internally democratic and financially transparent by law, he points out. "But no political parties will take the responsibility," he added.

Echoing the view, V S Sampath says that only an authority like the ECI can speedily dispose of matters. "Under the MCC, we usually give 24-48 hours notice for a person to give his explanation for any violation. If any law empowers the MCC, no court will resolve the matter within 48 hours. The issue will be forgotten till after the election ends," he said. He points out that the ECI has been given the power to supervise and conduct free and fair elections by Article 324 of the Constitution.

In tune with social media and AI

The ECI recently released guidelines prohibiting political parties from disseminating misinformation through social media platforms and technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI). The latest advisory directs parties to take down any deep fake audio/videos within three hours from social media platforms and warn the person responsible for it within the party.

It stated that political parties must not impersonate other persons, including parties or their representatives, on social media. It also directed political parties to refrain from using AI-based tools to distort information or spread falsehood. Parties are also banned from posting derogatory content on women and children.

WHY PENINSULAR INDIA IS REELING UNDER HEAT WAVE AND WATER CRISIS

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

I saw no difference at all in the sweltering conditions in Delhi and hill stations like Ooty and Coorg," rued Johnson D'Souza, 40, a Gurgaon-based multinational company employee who recently returned from a visit to his native Coorg and Ooty with his family to escape the Delhi scorcher. "I have no memory of such unprecedented heat and water crisis in my scenic native place. In Ooty, hotels and resorts don't have fans and air-conditioning equipment, which made our trip more unpleasant," he shared.

According to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), Ooty was at its hottest on April 30. It recorded 29.4°C, its highest maximum temperature since 1901. On April 29-30 in Kodagu, the maximum temperature was 38.6°C, with the minimum at 23.5°C. "Such high temperatures with humidity is unbearable and may impact our tourism business," said 65-year-old Jaiamma who runs a homestay for tourists in Udagamandlam.

Drought conditions in Kerala this year broke a 40-year record; major reservoir levels plunged to a new low in the Cauvery basin, especially in Karnataka; and villagers are digging wells and tubewells to get some water in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. Major cities such as Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad and dozens of smaller cities are facing severe drinking water shortage. Almost the whole of peninsular India is reeling under heat waves with temperatures hovering around 40-44°C.

In April, the IMD recorded the second highest minimum and maximum temperatures in peninsular India since 1901—25.8°C and 37.57°C, respectively. "If dry spells continue, water levels in different reservoirs would plummet to an all time low at the end of the month and result in large-scale labour migration to bigger cities, which are already water-stressed," said Ramanjaneyulu G V of Centre of Sustainable Agriculture, Hyderabad.

Deficit Southwest monsoon

India received 70% of its annual rainfall through the Southwest monsoon between June and September. The emergence of the El Nino phenomenon weakened the monsoon. El Nino is the unusual warming of surface waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean, which is synonymous with the weakening of the southwest Indian monsoon. India witnessed a 5.6% deficit in the Southwest monsoon in 2023. It had a bigger impact in the Southern Peninsula, which clocked an overall deficit of 8% across five states.

The deficit situation gets worse if one takes a closer look. For instance, there was a 24% rainfall deficit in Karnataka, which resulted in severe drought in 195 talukas of 23 districts. A 33% rainfall deficit was reported during the Southwest monsoon in the Cauvery basin spread across Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. It snowballed into a 51% shortfall in cumulative inflows to Karnataka's four major reservoirs monitored by the Central Water Commission. Even Kerala, which is the gateway to the Southwest monsoon, received a 34% deficit.

The rainfall deficit was 46% in the Pennar basin across Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Adjoining Pennar and the Cauvery basin, other basins such as Lower Tungbhadra (-50%), Upper Krishna (-42%), Krishna Pennar (-86%), Upper Bhima (-74%) and Lower Bhima (-65%) also had severe deficit.

Deficit Northeast monsoon

To begin with, the onset of the Northeast monsoon got delayed in October, overstayed till the middle of January and concluded with a shortfall by over 13% in the Southern peninsula and an overall deficit of 8.5% across the country. The Northeast monsoon contributes mostly to Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, parts of Karnataka and Rayalaseema. It was patchy too. It recorded deficits of 29% and 38% in Rayalaseema and in Karnataka respectively, but was surplus in Tamil Nadu (+4%) and Kerala (+27%).

Severe deficit pre-monsoon activities

The IMD recorded a huge deficit in pre-monsoon rainfall activities, which were important to arrest the plunging reservoir levels and bring down the temperatures. The rainfall during April 2024 over South Peninsular India (12.6 mm) was the fifth lowest since 1901 and second lowest since 2001.

According to the IMD, there was a deficit of 66-82% of pre-monsoon rainfall between March and the first week of May this year in all peninsular meteorological stations. In Rayalaseema, the deficit was 82% followed by Tamil Nadu region (-77%), South Interior Karnataka (-70%), Kerala (-66%) and Coastal Andhra Pradesh (-62%).

Plunging reservoir levels

The deficit of pre-monsoon rainfall led to a severe water crisis in April-May. According to the Central Water Commission's May 9 bulletin, in Karnataka's Krishnaraja Sagara (KR Sagar) and Kabini reservoirs, the live storage fell to a 30-year average low. KR Sagar had 10 TMC last year, which plunged to 7.2 TMC now. Similarly, Kabini had 4.6 TMC average live storage last year. It's down to 3.7 TMC this year. The available live storage of Tamil Nadu's reservoirs Mettur and Bhavanisagar are also lower than their 30-year average.

"If pre-monsoon showers don't get activated in the coming days, water level in KR Sagar will fall to its lowest since its inception," said Venkatesh R L, Chief Engineer Irrigation (South) Zone at the Cauvery Neeravari Nigama. The KR Sagar Dam reached its lowest level on June 13, 2013 to 62.80 ft. Its level as on May 9 was around 79 ft against last year's 85 ft.

Storage status of 42 important reservoirs in the South as on May 9

State	No. of reservoirs monitored	% departure from normal storage
Andhra Pradesh & Telangana (AP&TG)	2	-31
Andhra Pradesh	4	-81
Telangana	7	0
Karnataka	16	-24
Kerala	6	5
Tamil Nadu	7	-46

Both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are left with water only for drinking and domestic use till the southwest monsoon sets in. "Even if the Southwest monsoon is normal in June-July, because of acute moisture deficit in the soil due to the severe drought, there may not be enough runoff to the catchment of the Cauvery basin," said K E S Mahesha, managing director of the Cauvery Neeravari Nigama.

Climate change

Experts attribute several climatic factors to the excessive heating of peninsular India, which include weakening of the land-ocean temperature gradient due to global warming. Globally as well, each month is setting a new all-time record. The last 10 months since June 2023 have been the hottest on record because of El Nino. The Indian Ocean has one of the world's fastest-rising sea surface temperatures. "There are several factors involved in the current peninsular drought, including the strengthening of El Nino, which contributed to the above normal temperatures coupled with a long spell of marine heat wave in the Indian Ocean," said Dr Vimal Mishra, Professor, Civil Engineering and Earth Sciences, at Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar.

"Climate change induced the late onset of a strong Southwest monsoon and the change of cropping pattern towards water intensive paddy and cash crops like cotton," said Ramanjaneyulu.